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TETYANA BOROVA

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1765-4425>

(Maynooth University, Ireland)

e-mail: tetyana.borova@mu.ie

VIKTORIA PETRENKO

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7209-5107>

(Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Ukraine)

e-mail: viktoria.petrenko@hneu.net

## MONITORING OF THE NON-LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE MODEL

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### Model monitorowanie modelu międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej studenta wyższej uczelni

#### Abstrakt

W niniejszym badaniu opracowano nowe narzędzie, jakim jest model jakościowy międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej w oparciu o model międzykulturowej osobowości językowej. Na podstawie literatury poświęconej rozwojowi kompetencji komunikacyjnej osobowości językowej powstała 35-elementowa wersja oceny międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej, na którą składały się dwie grupy: grupa czynników związanych z kompetencjami językowymi i grupa językowych zadań i strategii komunikacyjnych. Aby uzasadnić sposób, w jaki czynniki w całym modelu międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej są rozłożone, ocena tych czynników została obliczona za pomocą wartości wskaźnika zgodności. W końcowym etapie oceniono rozwój międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej studentów, aby zademonstrować skuteczność proponowanej metody. Wyniki pokazały, że poziom międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej studentów był ściśle skorelowany ze stopniem ich biegłości językowej. Omówiono również implikacje i ograniczenia przeprowadzonego badania.

**Słowa kluczowe:** międzykulturowa kompetencja komunikacyjna, kompetencja komunikacyjna, kompetencje w zakresie języków obcych, uczelnie wyższe, monitorowanie, model jakościowy.

## Abstract

The present study developed a new instrument, the qualimetric model of cross-cultural communicative competence based on the model of the cross-cultural language personality. Based on a review of the literature devoted to the language personality's communicative competence development a 35-item version of the cross-cultural communicative competence evaluation was composed and contained two groups: a group of communicative language competencies factors and a group of communicative language activities & strategies. To justify how the factors in the whole model of cross-cultural communicative competence are distributed, the factors assessment was calculated with the conformance index value. Finally, the students' cross-cultural communicative competence development was assessed to demonstrate the performance of the proposed method. The results showed that the level of students' cross-cultural communicative competence was significantly correlated with students' language proficiency. Implications and limitations of the study are discussed as well.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural communicative competence, communicative competence, foreign language competence, higher educational institutions, monitoring, qualimetric model.

## 1. Introduction

Globalization and the era of the knowledge economy require employees to enhance their professional competence and develop their new professional skills systematically. According to a survey conducted by J. M. Woodside, communication (oral and written) is one of the most enforced competences that is required by industry and employers (Woodside, 2020).

However, the study also continues to be plagued with issues of conceptual ambiguity of non-linguistic students' cross-cultural communicative competence (hereinafter-CCCC) and the lack of valid instruments for measuring the concept. Although an increasing number of more and more scholars are making an effort to reduce this confusion (e.g. Wiemann, 1977; Spitzberg, 1988; Lehmann, 2007; etc.), more research is still needed as CCCC is among learning goals in many non-linguistic universities curricula. Considering Ukrainian Educational Standards for bachelor's and master's degree students for all specialities, particularly non-linguistic ones, communicative competence integrates the acquisition of a native language (L1) and a foreign language (L2) language as the minimum required for future employees. Furthermore, higher education institutions (hereinafter-HEI) can choose any foreign language in their educational programmes to satisfy learners' needs. In order to achieve the programme learning outcomes, to increase graduates' employability and induct as well as to inspire students' striving to learn

foreign languages, it is necessary to outline the CCCC within the frameworks of the linguistic system.

**The aim of this study** is to develop a new instrument, the qualimetric model of cross-cultural communicative competence based on the model of the cross-cultural language personality.

## **2. Methodology**

The present mini-research methodology includes descriptive analytics, data visualization, qualimetric and statistical analyses relevant to each stage of the study. The qualimetric approach is based on two main instruments, namely, 1) qualimetric modelling to justify the relation between all components of non-linguistic student's CCCC and outline strategies for this competence development; 2) qualimetric analysis to evaluate the level of students' CCCC. Data collected in all phases is processed using statistical and data mining techniques. Analysis of students' performance in obtaining CCCC may reveal questions that benefit them acquiring knowledge and achieving the goals of the course. The methodology can be enhanced with qualimetric approaches, i.e. by allowing students to find out their skill gaps or modify the way of skills acquisition.

## **3. Literature Review**

Scholars have identified different approaches to determine the notions of 'communicative competence'.

Researchers M. Canale and M. Swain determine communicative competence as a learner's ability to use language to communicate successfully (Canale & Swain, 1980). L. Tarvin defines communicative competence as 'the ability to use language, or to communicate, in a culturally-appropriate manner in order to make meaning and accomplish social tasks with efficacy and fluency through extended interactions' (Tarvin, 2015: 2). The basis of communicative competence is, of course, linguistic competence, which allows the individual to choose adequate linguistic means in accordance with the situations of the cross-cultural communication, to carry out the correct reference, to correlate mental schemes with the phenomena of reality as well as provides an opportunity to improve the experience gained in situations of cross-cultural interactions (Petrenko, 2017). Thus, CCCC is not only one's ability to use language to communicate, it consists of a wider range of logically connected actions to gain the communication goal.

#### **4. Development of the cross-cultural communicative competence model**

There are different theoretical methodological and empirical approaches to the conceptualization of many issues of HEI educational activity through the lens of a quality assurance system. In education, a quality assurance system is a collection of educational processes focused on consistently meeting stakeholders' requirements and enhancing their satisfaction. Thus, it is aligned with the higher educational institution's goals and strategy development. Monitoring can be regarded as one of the adaptive management technologies used to guarantee the educational product quality in relevance to the third wave of reforms in education aimed at contextualized multiple intelligences, globalization, localization and individualization (Cheong Cheng, 2003). Monitoring technique facilitates educational processes based on decision-making through internal quality assurance, namely, triplication of teaching, learning, delivery as well as interface quality assurance including stakeholders' satisfaction with the learning outcomes. It leads to a feasible stimulus to quality changes (Cheong Cheng, 2003; Borova & Marchuk, 2020).

Thus, quality assurance of the cross-cultural communicative competence model (hereinafter-CCCCM) can be defined as the degree to which CCCC as an educational product is in line with the learning outcomes stated in curricula (Scherman, 2017). Process monitoring and improvement are essential requirements of any quality assurance system (Pena-Rodriguez, 2019). Therefore, monitoring the development of CCCC model at non-linguistic universities aims to improve the quality of CCCC as this model will be presented in a set of measurable dimensions, each dimension representing one quality criterion. These quality criteria are linked to the dimensions for communicative competence articulated by the Council of Europe (2020) in Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020).

The monitoring process consists of the following stages: 1) the definition of aims or pre-requisites, i.e. expected learning outcomes in terms of relevance to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (hereinafter-CEFRL) (Council of Europe, 2020); 2) adaptation of the CEFRL criteria to stakeholders' requirements; 3) design of the CCCC based on the new criteria.

In order to reach the aim of this study, a questionnaire method was used to collect necessary data in four consecutive stages. The first stage aimed to reduce the number of the original items; the second stage aimed to generate the instrument; and the last stage aimed to test the validity of the instrument.

## STAGE 1

The objective in the initial stage of the test was to reduce the number of original items in the instrument of communicative competence. The 57 original items of the instrument (for assessing communicative competence) were reduced and the student participants completed the original 35 items of the instrument that were characterized in the book: Council of Europe (2020), Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment.

### *Method*

**Participants.** Participants in this stage were undergraduate students enrolled in an English course, which has an average of 5 credits per semester, in a non-linguistic university in the eastern part of Ukraine. A total of 125 students were applied for the data collection. The average age of the participants was 19.6.

**Instrument and Procedure.** After reading and signing the consent form for participation, the participants completed the original 35 items of the instrument. A five-point Likert scale was used in this study to respond to each item of the survey. The average time for the students to complete the survey was about 15 minutes.

### *Results*

The factors and criteria of the qualimetric model were selected and sorted out for the purpose of instrument construction in the second stage. The qualimetric model of cross-cultural communicative competence evaluation in Table 1 shows 35 items.

## STAGE 2

The objective of the second stage of the study was to determine the factor structure of the 35-item version of the qualimetric model of CCCC evaluation. The qualimetric model includes two groups, such as:

- a group of Communicative language competencies factors, such as: Linguistic competence, Sociolinguistic competence, Pragmatic competence;
- a group of Communicative language activities and strategies that includes the following factors: Reception activities, Production activities, Reception strategies, Interaction activities, Mediation activities, and Mediation activities.

## Method

Participants. The sample consisted of 120 students. Participants did not appear in the first stage of the test. Among them, 54 were males and 76 were females. The average age of the participants was 21.

Instrument and Procedure. After reading and signing the consent form for participation, participants completed the 35-item version of CCCC evaluation model during the regular class meeting time. The average time for the students to complete the survey was about 15-20 minutes.

## Results

Factor analysis was performed to generate the factors of CCCC. Table 1 shows the factors and criteria extracted from the results of the principal axis factor analysis. Its components were specified as the factors of this model, that were indicated as  $F_i, i = 1, \dots, 10$ , while the values of these factors were indicated as  $f_i, i = 1, \dots, 10$ :

$F_1$  - Linguistic competence,  $f_1 = 0.1$ ;

$F_2$  - Sociolinguistic competence,  $f_2 = 0.1$ ;

$F_3$  - Pragmatic competence,  $f_3 = 0.1$ ;

$F_4$  - Reception activities,  $f_4 = 0.1$ ;

$F_5$  - Production activities,  $f_5 = 0.1$ ;

$F_6$  - Reception strategies,  $f_6 = 0.1$ ;

$F_7$  - Production strategies,  $f_7 = 0.1$ ;

$F_8$  - Reception strategies,  $f_8 = 0.1$ ;

$F_9$  - Mediation activities,  $f_9 = 0.1$ ;

$F_{10}$  - Mediation strategy,  $f_{10} = 0.1$ .

Values of all factors are assigned 0.1 each, so the total value of each factor should be 1.

The next step of the survey results was to find out the value of every factor  $m_i$  that should be  $\geq 1$ . For example, the first factor 'Linguistic competence' consists of five criteria, namely, General linguistic range, Vocabulary range, Grammatical accuracy, Vocabulary control and Phonological control. According to the results of the survey,  $m_i$  was adjusted among all these criteria in the following way: 'General linguistic' range  $m_1=0.3$ , 'Vocabulary' range  $m_2=0.3$ , 'Grammatical accuracy'  $m_3=0.2$ , 'Vocabulary control'  $m_4 = 0.1$  as well as 'Phonological control'  $m_5= 0.1$ . The whole results of the survey were incorporated into Table 1.

Moreover, it was important to find out the conformance index value to assess the student's level of CCCC. According to the survey results the experts suggest giving the following values Table 2.

Table 1  
*The Qualimetric model of cross-cultural communicative competence evaluation*

Factor - $F_i$	Value $f_i$	Criteria content	value - $m_i$	con- form- ance in- dex-K	con- form- ance in- dex value	Partial criteria assess- ment	Partial factors assess- ment
<b>Communicative language competences</b>		General linguistic range	0.3	K1	0.8	0.24	
		Vocabulary range	0.3	K2	0.7	0.21	
1. Linguistic competence	0.1	Grammatical accuracy	0.2	K3	0.8	0.16	
		Vocabulary control	0.1	K4	0.5	0.05	
		Phonological control	0.1	K5	1	0.1	0.076
		Using polite forms	0.1	K6	0.7	0.07	
2. Sociolinguistic competence	0.1	Performing language functions in an appropriate way	0.3	K7	0.7	0.21	
		Socializing	0.1	K8	0.9	0.09	
		Plurilingual comprehension	0.2	K9	0.8	0.16	
		Building on pluricultural repertoire	0.3	K10	0.5	0.15	0.068
		Flexibility	0.1	K11	1	0.1	
3. Pragmatic competence	0.1	Turntaking	0.2	K12	0.6	0.12	
		Thematic development	0.3	K13	1	0.3	
		Coherence and cohesion	0.2	K14	1	0.2	
		Fluency	0.2	K15	1	0.2	0.092

Table 1  
*The Qualimetric model...* (cont.)

Factor - $F_i$	Value $f_i$	Criteria content	value - $m_i$	con- form- ance in- dex-K	con- form- ance in- dex value	Partial criteria assess- ment	Partial factors assess- ment
<b>Communicative language activities &amp; Strategies</b>		Oral comprehen- sion	0.3	K16	0.9	0.27	
4. Reception ac- tivities	0.1	Audio-visual comprehension	0.3	K17	0.8	0.24	
		Reading compre- hension	0.4	K18	1	0.4	0.091
5. Production ac- tivities	0.1	Oral production	0.5	K19	0.9	0.45	
		Written produc- tion	0.5	K20	0.8	0.4	0.085
6. Reception strategies	0.1	exploiting illustra- tions, formatting, headings, subti- tles, position in the text, etc.	0.3	K21	1	0.3	
		deducing mean- ing from the co- text and linguis- tic context	0.4	K22	0.9	0.36	
		exploiting lin- guistic clues	0.3	K23	1	0.3	0.096
7. Production strategies	0.1	Planning	0.3	K24	0.7	0.21	
		Compensating	0.4	K25	0.6	0.24	
		Monitoring and repair	0.3	K26	0.7	0.21	0.066
8. Interaction ac- tivities	0.1	Oral interaction	0.3	K27	0.7	0.21	
		Written interac- tion	0.3	K28	0.8	0.24	
		Online interac- tion	0.4	K29	0.9	0.36	0.081

Table 1  
*The Qualimetric model... (cont.)*

Factor - $F_i$	Value $f_i$	Criteria content	value - $m_i$	con- form- ance in- dex-K	con- form- ance in- dex value	Partial criteria assess- ment	Partial factors assess- ment
9. Mediation ac- tivities	0.1	Mediating a text	0.5	K30	0.9	0.45	
		Collaborating in a group	0.1	K31	0.8	0.08	
		Leading group work	0.1	K32	0.7	0.07	
		Mediating com- munication	0.3	K33	0.7	0.21	0.081
10. Mediation strategy	0.1	Strategies to ex- plain a new con- cept	0.5	K34	0.7	0.35	
		Strategies to sim- plify a text	0.5	K35	0.8	0.4	0.075
Total assessment in unit parts	1						0.811

Source: results of authors' research based on Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (Council of Europe, 2020).

Table 2  
*Criteria of values Communicative Language Competences, Activities & Strategies Evaluation*

CERF level	Criteria (students' level)
A2	0-0.2
B1	0.3-0.5
B2	0.6-0.8
C1	0.9-1

Source: results of authors' research.

### STAGE 3

The objective of this stage was to identify the conformance index value to  $k_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, 35$ .

### *Method*

Participants. The sample consisted of 15 students. Participants did not appear in the first and second stage of the test. Among them, 6 were males and 9 were females. The average age of the participants was 19.2.

Instrument and Procedure. Participants completed the 35-item version of the CCCC evaluation model during the regular class meeting time. The average time for the students to complete the survey was about 20-25 minutes.

### *Results*

The questionnaire results have been calculated, including the following indexes: age, programme name, year of study, self-assessment of one's communicative competence development level, as well as expert assessment of students communicative competence development level. After students have completed the table by putting their mark in the sixth column (Table 2, 'column conformance index value'), with the conformance index value, the factors assessment is to be calculated.

## **STAGE 4**

The objective of the fourth stage of the study was to evaluate the level of the students' CCCC and validate the results of the survey.

### *Method*

The factors assessment was to be calculated. To calculate the factors value and the students' rate some pieces of software in EXCEL and PASCAL programming languages were applied.

### *Results*

As an example, let's consider factor  $F_4$ . Three criteria of this factor are presented in the second line and the third column (Table 3).

The criteria values are defined by the experts and determined as  $m_i$ ,  $m_i = 0.3$ ,  $i = 1, 2, 3$ .

The first factor  $F_1$  covers five criteria, the second factor  $F_2$  comprises three criteria, the third one  $F_3$  includes three, the fourth one  $F_4$  comprises four, the fifth factor  $F_5$  includes three criteria, the sixth one  $F_6$  covers two criteria, the seventh one  $F_7$  incorporates three criteria, the eighth factor  $F_8$  covers three criteria, the ninth one  $F_9$  four criteria, and the tenth factor  $F_{10}$  comprises two ones. Altogether, there are 35 criteria. The criterion with index  $i$  from the third column corresponds to value  $m_i$  with the same  $i$  from the fourth column (Table 3, column 'conformance index  $m_i$ ').

Table 3  
Calculation of cross-cultural communicative competence evaluation (fragment)

Factor $F_i$	Factor' value $f_i$	Criteria content	conform- ance in- dex $m_i$	con- form- ance index value $k_i$	criteria as- sessment	factors as- sessment
$F_4$ - Reception activities	$f_4=0.1$	1. Oral compre- hension	$m_1=0.3$	0.9	0.27	$F_4=0.091$
		2. Audio-visual comprehension	$m_2=0.3$	0.8	0.24	
		3. Reading com- prehension	$m_3=0.4$	0.1	0.4	

Source: results of authors' research.

The students who evaluated their activity with the help of this qualimetric model had to assess one's activity according to each of the 35 criteria. Conformance index value is  $k_i$  for criterion  $i$ .

The experts suggest giving  $k_i$  the following value: 0.00-0.20 – a student doesn't correspond to a certain level around 0% to 40% of requirements; 0.30-0.50 – a student conforms to this level around 40%–60% of the requirements; 0.60-0.80 – a student corresponds to this level around 61%–75% of requirements; 0.90-1.00 – a student conforms to this level around 76%–100% of requirements.

After students have completed the table by putting their marks in the fifth column  $i$  conformance index value  $k_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, 35$ , the factors assessment is calculated.

The factors assessment is calculated. The factors assessment corresponds to the numbers that characterize the conformity of a student to the defined factors, these numbers are given the same letters  $F_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, 10$ , as the factors are calculated using the formulas:

$$F_1 = f_1 \sum_{i=1}^4 k_i m_i, F_2 = f_2 \sum_{i=6}^{10} k_i m_i, F_3 = f_3 \sum_{i=11}^{15} k_i m_i, F_4 = f_4 \sum_{i=16}^{18} k_i m_i, F_5 = f_5 \sum_{i=19}^{20} k_i m_i, F_6 = f_6 \sum_{i=21}^{23} k_i m_i, F_7 = f_7 \sum_{i=24}^{26} k_i, F_8 = f_8 \sum_{i=27}^{29} k_i, F_9 = f_9 \sum_{i=30}^{33} k_i, F_{10} = f_{10} \sum_{i=34}^{35} k_i$$

So, the factor value  $F_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, 10$  is the sum of this factor value  $f_i$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, 10$  on the paired sum of the total value sum of its criteria as well as on their conformance index value.

If the sum of every criteria conformance index value is 1, so the factor index is less or equal to the factor value.

$$F_1 \leq f_1, F_2 \leq f_2, F_3 \leq f_3, F_4 \leq f_4, F_5 \leq f_5, F_6 \leq f_6, F_8 \leq f_8, F_9 \leq f_9, F_{10} \leq f_{10}.$$

The sum of factors indexes  $F_i, i = 1, \dots, 10$  is considered to be equal to the level of student's CCCC and is marked as:  $r = \sum_{i=1}^{10} F_i$ . If we sum every component of the last inequality it will be:  $r = \sum_{i=1}^{10} F_i \leq \sum_{i=1}^{10} f_i = 1, r \leq 1$ , so the level of student's CCCC is always less or equal to 1, and is 1 exactly only in case when all conformance indices values are  $k_i = 1, i = 1, \dots, 35$ .

The analysis of the questionnaires made it possible to reveal the level of student's CCCC, activities and strategies cultivation and to pay attention to the specific techniques that show how the competence can be more effectively streamlined (Fig. 1). The chart in Fig. 1 demonstrates the achieved results by 15 students (their codes : CS1-CS15) that were assessed according to ten factors (F1-F10) listed in Table 1 (F1 'being linguistic competence', F2 'sociolinguistic competence' etc.). According to the results of the research, it was found out that most students do not master the communicative strategy competence, and have a low level of sociolinguistic competence as well as pluricultural competence. The model reflects the continuity of actions to be taken to improve students' CCCC.

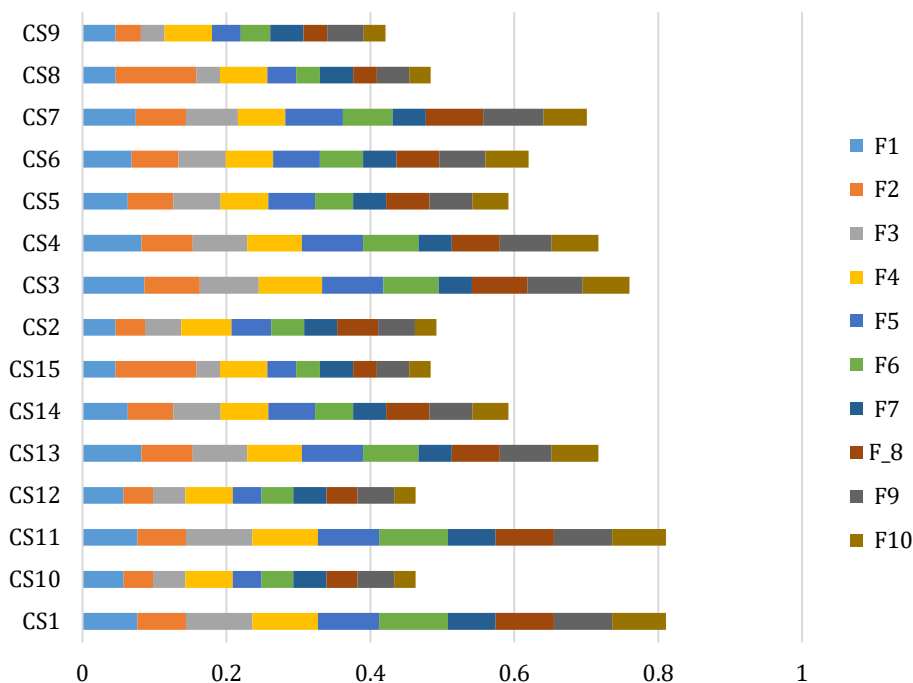


Fig. 1

The Results of the Students' CCCCC, Activities and Strategies Evaluation (Source: results of authors' research)

## 5. Conclusions

This work deals with methodology of students' CCCC, activities and strategies evaluation. The monitoring of the students' action throughout the educational process of English learning based on student-friendly qualimetric instruments provides a lot of opportunities for students as well as for teachers, such as assessing the students' level of obtained communicative language competences, communicative activities and strategies skills; eliciting gaps during the learning process to make a decision how to enhance them; the constant improvement of the programme's learning objectives as well as the modules' learning outcomes; creating positive learning environment; students engagement in the learning process and their results performance.

Regular monitoring of students' CCCC and in-depth analysis of collected data allows us to define which aspects of language acquisition should be improved. The framework for the analysis of collecting data presents a way to improve students' cross-cultural competence with guided SWOT analysis. The research outlook is to define a set of measures for course evaluation based on the qualimetric approach.

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