
CULTURAL COMPETENCE: PREPARING FUTURE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS FOR PRACTICE IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Aušra Stepanovienė*

*Mykolas Romeris University Public Security Academy Department of Humanities
Putvinskis st. 70, LT-44211 Kaunas
Telephone +370 37 303664
E-mail: ausrastep@mruni.eu*

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Abstract. Evolving processes of globalization, liberalization and integration and their induced changes pose new challenges to learning/teaching of foreign languages and cultural competence development. Law enforcement officers frequently face difficulties perceiving and interpreting actions and behaviour of citizens from other cultures. It may have the negative impact on law enforcement officers' communication and prevent them from efficient performing of their duties, which include safety of the community. Therefore, while preparing future law enforcement officers it is of crucial importance to develop their cultural competence. The article covers law enforcers' attitude towards the cultural aspect of professional foreign language learning/teaching, its significance and development possibilities in studies of law enforcement at Mykolas Romeris University, Public Security Academy.

Keywords: future law enforcement officers, culture, cultural competence.

INTRODUCTION

Research relevance. Rapidly occurring globalization, liberalization and integration processes determine interaction of different cultures and multicultural academic environment where cultural problems and development of cultural competence becomes a must. Massive migration as well as a variety of different political, economic, legal and cultural changes pose new challenges for governing, economic, cultural, education and other institutions. European and world authorities are supposed to ensure respect of all world cultures, fostering of national identity and successful overcoming of cultural differences. Living in a multicultural society, which can be characterized by cultural variety, one must promote intercultural cooperation and communication, be interested in his/her own and other cultures as well as co-create harmonious and democratic society based on intercultural relations and dialogue between representatives of different cultures and religions who occupy distinct social and/or economic positions.¹

¹ Mažeikis, G. (2010). Filosofas Gintautas Mažeikis: moralė gali naikinti kultūrą ir atvirkščiai. Šiaurės Atėnai, 2010-03-03, Nr.979 [žiūrėta 2019 m. sausio 10 d.]. Prieiga per internetą: http://www.culture.lt/satenai/?leid_id=979&kas=straipsnis&st=17456

EU documents *Lifelong Learning Programme Call for Proposals 2011–2013 Strategic Priorities*,² *Developing Key Competences at School in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy. Eurydice Report*,³ *Education and Training in Europe 2020 – the Contribution of Education and Training to Economic Recovery, Growth and Jobs*⁴ state that it is crucially important to develop general competences that would enable young individuals to work and learn in multicultural situations and adjust to rapidly changing environment. The importance of one particular competence, namely intercultural competence, disregarding peculiarity of person's activity is emphasized in Lithuanian documents as well (*State 2013–2022 Education Strategy; Lithuania's Progress Strategy Lithuania 2030* (2012); *Vision „Learning Lithuania 2030”* (2012); *The New National Strategy/Action Plan of Internationalisation of Lithuanian Higher Education*. (2013) et al.). Intercultural competence becomes a necessity since homogeneity due to foundation of multicultural society rapidly deteriorates affected by globalization.

Establishment of globalization term encouraged changes of the concept 'culture'. In recent decades global culture, cross-culture and multi-culture are quoted more frequently. All these terms make a presupposition for cultural and national equality independently of geographic, historic or national culture differences and allow equal participation in cultural interaction.⁵ Globalisation processes revealed that homogeneous culture groups do not exist. They have been replaced by culturally heterogeneous groups. Culture is perceived not as a static and hermetic structure but as entirety of constantly changing values where old relationships disappear and new ones are established.⁶ Thus, culture is a dynamic process encompassing a change of norms, values and a way of life. However, different cultures are globally intermingled and, therefore, difficulties and objectives of a cultural dialogue arise such as preserving identity,

² Lifelong Learning Programme Call for Proposals 2011–2013 Strategic Priorities. (2010). [žiūrėta 2019 m. kovo 18 d.]. Prieiga per internetą: http://ec.europa.eu/education/llp/doc/call13/prior_en.pdf

³ Developing Key Competences at School in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy. Eurydice Report. (2012). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union [žiūrėta 2018 m. lapkričio mėn. 20 d.]. Prieiga per internetą: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/145EN.pdf.

⁴ Education and Training in Europe 2020 – the contribution of education and training to economic recovery, growth and jobs. (2012). Tarybos išvados. [žiūrėta 2018 m. lapkričio mėn. 4 d.]. Prieiga per internetą: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/policy-framework_en.htm

⁵ Blasko, A. (2008). Diversity and Dialogue: Culture and Values in the Age of Globalization. New York: Council for Research and Values.

⁶ Intercultural competence – the key competence in the 21st century? (Theses by the Bertelsmann Stiftung based on the models of intercultural competence by Dr. D.K. Deardorff). [žiūrėta 2018 gruodžio mėn. 5 d.] Prieiga per internetą: http://www.kununu.bertelsmann-stiftung.delbst/delmedialxcms_bst_dms_18255_18256_2.pdf.

defence against euro-centric, anglo-centric etc. claims as well as perception of symbolic language significant for life and world meaning.⁷

Changes of cultural perception pose new requirements for education, which include preparation of law enforcement officers as well. EU law is multilinguistic. Its studies are not separated from learning legal French, English or German languages. As law is a part of human culture, closely related to historically established cultural traditions and changes, in global world law students feel the increasing demand for intercultural competence since communication in foreign languages with people from multicultural environment has become crucially important in their professional practice. It is especially significant in international European courts where representatives of different countries, judicial systems and national cultures seek agreement in cases sensitive culturally and historically. One of the fundamental objectives raised by EU Cultural Communication Commission is to “better perceive lifestyle, thinking and cultural heritage of other nations”⁸, which is implemented by developing cultural competence. Importance of cultural education is also emphasized in Republic of Lithuania Law on Education, which raises the following objectives: “render to the individual the fundamentals of national and ethnic culture, European and world humanistic culture traditions and values; ensure conditions for development of one’s mature national identity, moral, esthetic, scientific culture and worldview; to guarantee continuity of a nation, country’s culture, preservation of its identity, continuous creation of its values; to foster uniqueness and dialogue of the country; to provide conditions for an individual to gain the basics of civic and political culture embodying democracy traditions; to extend abilities and experience crucial to an individual as a competent Lithuanian citizen, a member of European and world community and multicultural society.”⁹

Research of intercultural competence is relevant on both international and Lithuanian scale. Numerous scientists devoted their works to investigations of methodological assumptions of intercultural competence (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2017; Bazgan, Niculescu, 2016; Mažeikienė, Virgailaitė-Mečkauskaitė, 2011; Žydzūnaitė et al., 2010). Works of researchers N. Stone (2006), D. K. Deardorff (2009), T. R. Williams, (2009) E. Virgailaitė-Mečkauskaitė (2011), L. Chodzkienė (2012) pay more attention to the issues of creating the conception of

⁷ Kim, Y.Y. (2005). *Adapting to a New Culture: An Integrative Communication Theory*. In: Gudykunst W.B. *Theorizing about Intercultural Communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

⁸ Bendrieji Europos kalbų mokymosi, mokymo ir vertinimo metmenys. (2008). Vilnius: Firidas

⁹ Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas. Nauja įstatymo redakcija 2016 m. balandžio 7 d. Nr. XII-2290.

intercultural competence. Expression of intercultural competence is analysed in publications of numerous scientists (Barcytė, 2009; Paurienė, 2010; Kvieskaitė, 2011; Kossakovska-Pisarek, 2016; Patel, 2014; Norvilienė, 2014 et al.).

Research problem. As far as preparation of law enforcement officers at university is concerned, research into students' intercultural competence development is scarce. On the basis of scientific literature analysis and law enforcement officers' activity peculiarities G. Paurienė revealed expression of intercultural competence within the context of officers' preparation, introduced pedagogic strategy of intercultural competence development encompassing the areas of culture comparison, co-existence and anti-racism. Linguistic competence of police officers within the context of other competences was investigated by S. Rimkutė and R. Dobržinskienė. V. Smalskys, writing about trends of staff training emphasized social competence as one of the crucial competences, i.e. the ability to maintain contacts with citizens and solve conflicts.

Currently professional language learning/teaching is facing new challenges that are related to cultural diversity. Therefore, foreign language learning is perceived as a process based on holistic approach encompassing not only linguistic skills but also cultural competence. Our country lacks research concerning the impact of foreign languages on development of cultural competence. The language is a significant constituent of a nation and its culture, which reflects nation's history, traditions, geography, etc.¹⁰ Thus, culture of the nation is overtaken and assimilated when learning a foreign language. It is no less important to envisage one's own culture in wider contexts, i.e. within another culture, its evaluation and comparison with the other culture as well as communication with representatives of diverse cultures. It supplements student's personal experience, social and political judgement, fosters understanding and tolerance.¹¹ According to Pegrum, while developing students' attitude towards culture, intercultural literacy is crucially important. It includes one's ability to 'read' cultural information, to assess it critically on the basis of the already obtained knowledge as well as to experience and simultaneously assess the possessed knowledge critically regarding new cultural experience. These skills are crucial to a contemporary and future law enforcement officer, who is preparing for successful integration into global world, where cultural and

¹⁰ Šernas, V. (2006) Svarbi metodologinio kalbų mokymosi modelio dimensija. *Acta paedagogica Vilnensia*, Nr. 16.

¹¹ Pasikowska-Schnass, M. (2017) Arts, culture, and cultural awareness in education. European Parliament. [žiūrėta 2019 m. kovo 2 d.]. Prieiga per internetą: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2017\)608807](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2017)608807).

sociocultural differences are increasingly intermingling and misunderstandings are more frequent.¹²

Preparing law enforcement officers it is essential to analyse aspects of their competence related to development of professional linguistic competence and moral values.¹³ Development of law enforcement officers' cultural competence and attitudes towards changing culture in Lithuania have not been analysed more thoroughly. It provides grounds for relevance of law enforcers' cultural competence analysis and allows one to formulate scientific research problem: what is future law enforcers' cultural competence and what students' education at university perspectives are.

Research object – expression of MRU Public Security Academy future law enforcement officers' cultural competence.

Research aim is to reveal ways of expressing future law enforcement officers' cultural competence and its development assumptions at university:

Research objectives:

- a) To highlight future law enforcement officers' attitudes towards a cultural aspect of learning a professional foreign language and its importance at university;
- b) To find out what methods applied learning independently and during studies help develop student's cultural competence;
- c) Display possibilities of developing future law enforcement students' cultural competence at Mykolas Romeris University, Public Security Academy.

Research methods. a) analysis of scientific literature concerning preparation of law enforcement officers and cultural competence conception b) questionnaire that has revealed future law enforcement officers' attitude towards cultural competence and possibilities of its development.

Defining the sample. MRU Public Security Academy II and III course Law and police activity study programme students who are learning a professional foreign language participated in the research. The survey was conducted in February-March of 2018. 83 respondents were males (61) while the minority were females (22).

¹² Pegrum, M. (2008). Film, Culture and Identity: Critical Intercultural Literacies for the Language Classroom. T. 8, Nr. 2. [žiūrėta 2018 m gruodžio 20 d.] Prieiga per internetą: <http://www.inforaworld.com/smpp/title-content=t794297827>.

¹³ Chop, D. (2017). Addressing Cultural Bias in the Legal Profession. University of Michigan.

CONCEPT OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

It is complicated to provide a single definition of intercultural competence because different authors (Deardorff, 2009; Mažeikienė, Virgailaitė-Mečkauskaitė, 2011; Williams, 2009; Chodzkienė, 2012 et al.) define it in different ways and suggest different patterns. Summarizing the patterns introduced in scientific literature one can claim that all authors identify three levels: cognitive (knowledge about one's own and other cultures, cultural differences, similarities, cultural norms, beliefs, values, etc.); emotional (personal qualities, attitudes, emotions, feelings, etc.), behaviour (reveals application of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, cultural experience within intercultural communication and cooperation). Each level contains certain structural components. One can identify 15 most frequently encountered structural components essential for individuals who live in multicultural society and seek intercultural dialogue (respect to other cultures, openness, tolerance to ambiguity, flexibility, empathy, curiosity, desire to discover and know, cultural knowledge, cultural perception, ability to listen to the speaker, ability to observe, interpret, compare, analyse and evaluate; the ability to solve/avoid conflicts, knowing foreign languages, understanding non-verbal language).

Having evaluated ideas about intercultural competence introduced by different Lithuanian and foreign scientists, one can define the essence of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence opens the way to the intercultural dialogue for people of different cultures. It provides conditions for constructive communication and cooperation. Intercultural competence is not the inborn quality but it must be developed throughout the lifetime.

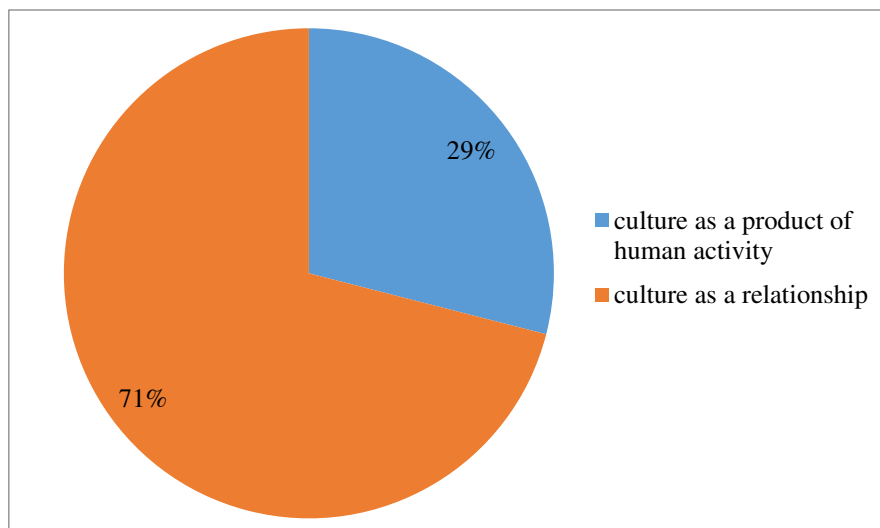
On the basis of separated cultural communication patterns, their levels and components, empiric research was conducted in order to reveal ways of expressing future law enforcement officers' cultural competence and assumptions of its development at university.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research questionnaire was compiled on the basis of M. Byram et al.¹⁴ Cultural dimension pattern, dividing questions into three main blocks by basic competence parameters: knowledge, abilities, moral values. Students' answers in the fourth block were used to find out learners' attitude to the aspect of cultural competence development.

¹⁴ Byram, M., Gribkova, B., Starkey, H. (2002). *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching: a Practical Introduction for Teachers*. Strasbourg: the Council of Europe.

The first questionnaire block defined future law enforcers' perception about culture, its relation to the language and the methods applied to enrich the knowledge concerning culture. The obtained answers were grouped on the basis of cultural dimensions defined in *Universal Lithuanian Encyclopaedia*: culture is individual's relationship with himself/herself, society and environment; culture – as a product of human activity.¹⁵ Distribution of respondents' answers is provided in picture 1.



Picture 1. Conception of culture by future law enforcement officers (%).

As we can see in Picture 1, 71 % of respondents relate culture to interpersonal relations whereas 29% point out culture as the product of human activity.

Respondents' opinion about relationship between culture and language is provided in table 1.

Table 1. Attitude of future law enforcers towards relationship between culture and language

Attitude	Number of responses	Percentage
You cannot learn a foreign language well if you do not know the culture of the country the language of which you are learning.	68	81.9%
Cultural knowledge helps when learning a foreign language but it is not essential.	13	15.6%
Language and culture are not related. You can learn a foreign language without knowing the culture.	2	2.0%

¹⁵ Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija. (2007). Vilnius, Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas. T. XI, p. 224-225.

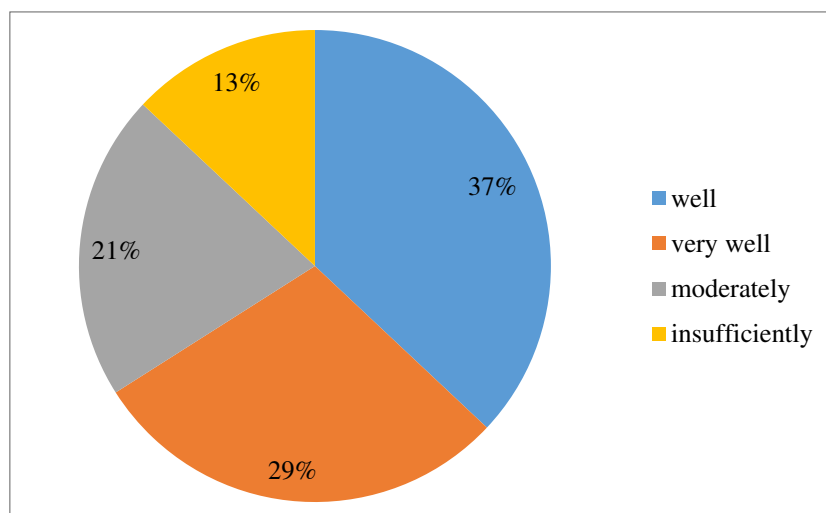
The research has shown that more than a half of respondents see the relationship between a language and culture and believe that learning of a language is an inseparable part of culture. 15.6 % of interviewees feel that cultural knowledge helps when learning a language though they do not see stronger correlation.

In order to know in what ways except for studies at university future law enforcers develop their cultural competence, students were displayed in table 2.

Table 2. Ways applied by future law enforcers developing their cultural awareness (%)

Way	Strongly help	Help	Slightly help	Do not help/not applied
Travelling	69,8	24,0	6,0	0
Television programmes	42,1	47,2	2,4	0
Surfing the Internet	45,7	28,0	21,6	3,6
Social networks	53,0	32,5	14,4	0
Fiction	48,1	22,8	21,6	7,2
Communication with foreigners	65,0	25,0	9,6	0
Computer games	12,0	12,0	6,0	69,8
Cinema	43,3	48,1	6,0	2,4
Scientific literature	40,9	28,9	23,0	6,0

Table 2 clearly indicates that students consider travelling communication with foreigners as the most efficient methods of developing cultural awareness. More than a half of respondents rate high the benefit of social networks and only slightly less than a half of respondents are in favour of fiction reading for broadening their horizons. Surfing the internet, cinema, television programmes and scientific literature are regarded as even less important. In students' opinion, computer games provide the lowest value for developing their cultural awareness.



Picture 2. Evaluation of future law enforcement officers' communication skills with representatives of other cultures (%)

In order to evaluate the cultural competence level of future law enforcement officers the question about their cooperation with representatives of other cultures was provided. The results are displayed in picture 2.

It is obvious that the bigger part of respondents evaluate their ability to communicate in different cultural environment very well (29%) or well (37%). 21 % of respondents evaluate themselves moderately while 13 % state that it is rather difficult for them to communicate with representatives of other cultures.

Similar distribution of cultural values can be observed. Compiling questions, E.P.Iljin's¹⁶ description of emotional experiences, which differentiates between positive (openness, respect and tolerance, curiosity and joy), negative emotions (anxiety and fear, anger, shame and fault) as well as the indifferent attitude towards other cultures was employed. 38% of respondents point out that they would rather communicate with representatives of other cultures and are open and tolerant to cultural differences. They respect and accept different opinions and feel competent to communicate on different topics. 41 % of students claim that they are tolerant and open to cultural differences though they avoid (feel uneasy and afraid) topics that could encourage conflict situations. 14% of future law enforcement officers state that they feel positive towards contacts with similar cultural mentality individuals and are open to new experiences. However, they notice that they face difficulties when communicating with people from completely hostile cultures. 7% of respondents state that they avoid communicating with representatives of other cultures, especially if their culture is totally different. They feel fear and lack self-confidence in such situations.

Summarizing one can claim that the vast majority of future law enforcement officers treat their cultural competence favourably. Only a small part of respondents feel that they are not competent enough to communicate in different cultural contexts.

The aim of the research was to identify the possibilities to develop law enforcers' cultural competence provided by Law and police activity study programme. There is no separate subject of culture studies in the programme. Students were provided five options, indicated in table 3.

The data analysis has shown that the majority of law enforcers see the importance of culture studies. 49% of respondents claim that cultural studies must be a compulsory subject in Law and police activity study programme. 30.1% of respondents would like to have cultural

¹⁶ Iljin, E.P. (2001). Emocijos ir jausmai. Sankt-Peterburgas.

studies as an optional subject. Only 8.4% of respondents believe that they are provided sufficient cultural knowledge and abilities when studying other specialization subjects.

Table 3. Future law enforcement officers' attitude towards cultural studies

Options	Number of responses	Percentage
Cultural studies must be the compulsory subject of the study programme.	49	59.0
Cultural studies must be an optional subject in the study programme.	25	30.1
The subject of cultural studies is not necessary because culture is widely discussed during lectures of other subjects.	7	8.4
Cultural studies should not be included in the study programme because it would be an extra workload for students that has no practical value.	0	0
I have no opinion.	2	2.0

Future law enforcement officers were asked to point out what subjects studied currently help broaden cultural horizons most. 39.7% of interviewees pointed out foreign language as the subject most developing cultural competence. 34.9% of respondents regard the subject of professional ethics as significant from cultural point of view. 13.0% students believe that psychology and law lectures and seminars develop their cultural competence most while 12% of respondents feel that the professional language takes the leading role in the field.

The research also aimed to know future law enforcement students' opinion about possibilities to broaden cultural horizons at university. 28.9% would like to have more teachers who are native-language speakers or discussions with English-speaking guests. 24.0% students believe that more cultural events should be organized. In addition, the university should show more films on the issues of culture and performances should be arranged. The same number of students (24.0%) would prefer to have more discussions on cultural issues during lectures/seminars. They would like to be introduced not only to theoretical material but also be presented filmed content. 22.8% students would like to have more possibilities to participate in exchange programmes.

CONCLUSIONS

Almost all future law enforcement students envisage close connection between a culture and a language. However, the concept of culture is perceived in two ways: 71% of respondents see culture as a relationship with oneself, others and the environment while the rest part (29%) perceive culture as the product of human activity.

The vast majority (90%) of students claim that they broaden their cultural horizons by travelling, communicating with representatives of other cultures in reality or social networks. The lowest significance is provided for computer games.

Around 70% of the subjects evaluate their cultural development very well or well. They state that they are able to communicate in diverse cultural environments as well as establish and maintain relationship with people of different cultures. However, still a rather big part of students (34%) evaluate their cultural competence moderately or insufficiently, i.e. feel discomfort, anxiety, reluctance to communicate with people from other cultures.

Future law enforcement officers envisage the importance of cultural studies in learning/teaching process. The vast majority (59%) feel that this subject must be compulsory in the study programme whereas 30.1 % of students would like to have cultural studies as an optional subject.

The larger share (39.7%) of respondents point out a foreign language as the subject that develops their cultural competence most. However, even 90% of future law enforcement officers would prefer to improve the study programme by inviting lecturers who are native-speakers of a foreign language or organizing more cultural events and extending students' exchange programmes.

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Aušra Stepanovienė*. Mykolas Romeris University, Academy of Public Security, Department of Humanities, lecturer. Research interests: professional English methodology and didactics, theory and practice of legal English translation.