

## ON THE PROBLEM OF ETHNIC TOLERANCE FORMATION IN MULTICULTURAL STUDENT ENVIRONMENT

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This article is devoted to the urgent problem of formation of students' interethnic tolerance in multicultural university environment. The study was conducted on the basis of the Kazakh National Agrarian University, as the agrarian university students are mainly countryside representatives. Their example can show how transition from mainly mono-national (Kazakh) environment into multi-ethnic urban society impact on their tolerant consciousness. The study aims to determine the level of interethnic tolerance/intolerance in 1st year students and development of their tolerant consciousness formation criteria. The methodological basis of the research is grounded on the concept of domestic and foreign pedagogy, cultural studies, psychology and sociology which consider multidimensional tolerance appearance as growing and dynamic phenomenon. Tolerance in this case acts as a subject of interdisciplinary study, as a phenomenon that integrates aspects of national cultures characteristics exploration by a personality. During the research the following methods were used: analysis and study of scientific literature on the researched topic and its systematization, pedagogical and psychological monitoring of interpersonal relations in student groups; design and organization of educational process using the developed teaching materials; observation and analysis of interethnic tolerance formation in students through the study of ethnic culture of the people of Kazakhstan with a view to identifying good practices and shortcomings, questioning students, public opinion poll; at the end of the experiment the methods of experimental data processing, analysis and synthesis of the results were used. The criteria for the level of interethnic tolerance formation in students were developed. In determining the extent of formation of interethnic tolerance is possible to allocate the following structure of levels: low, medium (multicultural-oriented), high (multicultural-valuable and personally meaningful).

**Keywords:** Inter-ethnic tolerance, multicultural education, educational environment, language of international communication.

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays society is full of a variety of conflicts. But even against this background ethnic conflicts take a special place on their severity, scale and consequences for state future. In addition, they are often intertwined with other kinds of conflicts – political, economic, etc. It is especially characteristic for heterogeneous in their ethnic composition states like Kazakhstan. However, unlike many post-Soviet countries, our country has successfully managed to avoid the outbreak of inter-ethnic conflicts and political instability. This is due to the fact that during the years

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of independence in the Republic of Kazakhstan there was developed a special model of interethnic relations which combines the inherent to Kazakh ethnic group national specificity and introduction of international best practices in the field of inter-ethnic dialogue; there had been formed optimal for Kazakh realities regulatory framework in the field of intercultural communication.

The cultural program “Trinity of languages” was initiated by the government of Kazakhstan in 2003. Nursultan Nazarbayev formulated his position on this issue in the following way: “Kazakhstan should be perceived worldwide as a highly educated country whose population can use three languages. This is Kazakh – the state language, Russian as the language of international communication and English – the language of successful integration into the global economy”. The Address of the President Nursultan Nazarbayev 2014 “Strategy” Kazakhstan-2050 “: new policy of the established state” says: “To become a developed competitive state we have to be a highly educated nation. In today’s world just a universal literacy is already obviously insufficient. Our citizens must be ready to acquire the skills of working on the most advanced equipment and the most modern production constantly. ... We must actively introduce innovative methods, solutions and tools into the national education system, ... including over there programs on practical skills and gaining practical qualifications” (Message of the President N.A. Nazarbayev “Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050”: new policy of the established state”, 2014).

Integration of modern national education system in the world space, accession of our country to the Bologna process cause the introduction of modernized technologies, improving quality of educational process. In this regard, the higher education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan has actively implemented provisions of the so-called “Dublin descriptors” relating to the Bologna qualifications framework based five main learning outcomes: knowledge and understanding, usage of knowledge and understanding abilities in practice, ability to make judgments, evaluation of ideas and formulation of conclusions in the field of communication skills in the field of education. Currently there are a lot of things said about multicultural education. Many scientists regard multicultural education as an interdisciplinary process, rather than as a standalone program. According to Y.V. Taratukhina (2015), multicultural education space “in fact is a cross-cultural education: it is space comprising a plurality of heterogeneous information and educational environments that are able to interact in the form of educational communication and educational activities and have the “diffusion” feature.

Multicultural educational space of a university is a special spiritually rich atmosphere bringing together communities of persons with a view to involve them into business and interpersonal contacts, determining their outlook, way of thinking and behavior and stimulating in them the need for initiation to the national and universal spiritual values; space is of positive interaction between individuals,

groups, cultures, representing different ethnic groups, cultures, religions, etc.; institution with multicultural contingent, including mixed-aged, multi-ethnic and multireligious students and faculty staff aimed to meet educational, socio-cultural and adaptive needs of students.

Formation of ethnic tolerance should be directed to discovery and manifestation of the best human qualities, development by younger generations the values of multiethnic society cultures, ensuring convergence of peoples based on respect, understanding and acceptance, readiness for positive interaction and constructive dialogue with representatives of different nationalities, personalities striving to achieve mutual respect, reconciliation values, all sorts of interests, views and different perspectives on issues of international communication, interethnic cooperation based on dialogue between cultures. In this context, the issue of interethnic tolerance formation among the students is one of the most urgent, because students are the most advanced, organized, intellectually and creatively developed part of youth. Student youth largely determines the vector of future transformations in the Kazakhstan society. Tolerance for a student involves relations within the student environment and, of course, outside of it. This is acceptance and appreciation by students the vast cultural diversity, the value of the other personality; reflected goodwill and empathy, manifested in active attitude, communication, behavior, conflict and problem situations resolution.

The students of the agrarian university are mainly countryside representatives. Their example can clearly show how transition from the mainly mono-national (Kazakh) environment into multi-ethnic urban environment has an impact on their tolerant consciousness. Humanitarian education of future farmers, representatives of the rural elite, who will develop domestic agriculture includes language education and training of interethnic tolerance. In order to contribute to the promotion of tolerance and prevent the spread of extremism and violence it is necessary, above all, to develop in people respect for the diversity of different world cultures, civilizations and peoples, willingness to understand and cooperate with people differing in appearance, language, beliefs. The process of interethnic tolerance formation in the agricultural sector specialists is provided by inclusion in the system of training of ethno-cultural component that contributes to development of motivational, cognitive, behavioral readiness and ability of students to constructive international relations, development of an enabling ethno-social, multicultural university environment, arouses interest and respect to languages and cultures of other nations.

Expanding cooperation with the ethno-cultural associations for joint activities in ethno-cultural education of young people has become an urgent and timely task for educational institutions. Major authorities in this process are assigned to the teaching staff. At the same time, responsibility and role of students is increasing. Tolerance in the student community should be developed by means of the joint

extracurricular work of students, and preferably not competitive, not individual but collective [Kozhakhmetova & Yunusova, 2016; Kabyzbekova, 2000; Nauryzbay, 2008).

This article presents the results of the first phase of work under the research project “Formation of ethnic tolerance in language multicultural educational space of Agricultural University” (2015-2017) pursued within the framework of grant financing by MES RK Committee. This project is a continuation of long-term work of KazNAU faculty regarding education of interethnic and intercultural tolerance in multicultural environment. In 2004 for the first time in our country in the Kazakh National Agrarian University was created Assembly “Dostyk” uniting students of different ethnic groups. Also, the project “For dialogue between cultures through the Russian language” was successfully implemented in KazNAU, kindly supported by the international fund “Russian World” (2012). The project “Formation of ethnic tolerance in language multicultural educational space of agricultural university” is directed on realization of Kazakhstan’s model of interethnic and interreligious harmony in the system of higher education the main consolidating principle of which is “Unity through diversity”.

This model includes:

- ensuring compliance for rights and freedoms of ethnic minorities;
- use of adequate measuring tools and systems for determination of ethnic development dynamics and its trends;
- state support for development of national cultures and languages;
- taking into account diverse specific national needs and interests of various ethnic groups.

The project contributes to the creation of favorable conditions in the formation of a multicultural space and inter-ethnic tolerance among students of agrarian university and formation of basic values such as respect to other languages and cultures, inter-ethnic harmony. The objective of this phase of the study is developing criteria for the formation of inter-ethnic tolerance in the process of linguistic and multi-cultural education in agricultural university. In this context, the rising matter is building education in multicultural space of the university aimed to provide more comfortable and effective educational practice, since modern specialist is not just a high school graduate; foremost, it is a man of high culture, a moral person, a full-fledged citizen of his community.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In modern world along with globalization of all social development processes sharply raises the matter of cooperation and peaceful coexistence of ethnic communities, declaring different, sometimes incompatible cultural values. Therefore, since the mid-twentieth century the problem of tolerance formation

has been actively studied. Tolerance as a value of integrated society, as a fundamental principle of mankind moral solidarity, as the practice and the principle of action in relationships between people, as a positive characteristic of a personality attracted attention of researchers in various fields. Each of these research directions includes theoretical studies, methodological approaches and empirical materials.

Issues of ethnic tolerance in multicultural society were developed in the works of foreign specialists: J. Berry (2002) after analysis of the mutual installation of various ethnic groups representatives, factors of acculturation and adaptation, proposed a comparative approach, identifying as well that tolerance appearance is due to emergence of ethnic identity and geographical mobility of individuals; In 2000 there was published the study of M. Walzer (2000) who drew attention to the shape and boundaries of tolerance considering a state of loss of social control as its limit. In Russia issue of tolerance study was addressed by anthropologists and psychologists.

The problem of tolerance was the subject of comprehensive research at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences under the leadership of V.A. Tishkov (1997) who studied it in the context of ethnicity and cultural distance issues. Methodological issues of tolerance ethnological research are studied in the works of Y.V. Arutyunyan (2003), V.Y. Bromley (2009), L.N. Gumilev (1989). The factors contributing to the formation of ethnic tolerance and intolerance, – valence of ethnic identity and cultural distance between the two groups – have been considered by G.U. Soldatova (1998), T.G. Stefanenko (2000), N.M. Lebedeva and A.N. Tatarko (2005), M.P. Mchedlov (2002). The studies of M.B. Khomyakov (2003), V.I. Garadzha (2004) and others are devoted to the issues of ethnic tolerance in the philosophical and sociological aspects. The studies of these scholars include analysis of the principles of tolerance implementation in various types of social systems, as well as defining the boundaries of tolerance. Philosophical and sociological analysis of the concept “tolerance” is also represented in the works of A.G. Asmolov (2003), A.G. Zdravomyslov (1986), V.A. Lektorskiy (1999), V.M. Sokolov (2003) and others.

Tolerance as an integral component of intercultural competence is considered by A. Kparr-Potthoff (1990), I.S. Solovyova (2007), M.S. Lukyanchikova (2000) and other researchers. Intercultural competence is presented as an integrative identity feature which is characterized by tolerance and open attitude to representatives of different cultures, as well as the general ability to mobilize cultural and linguistic expertise to solve problems in a situation of intercultural communication. The issues of tolerance formation among the younger generation are revealed in the researches of psychologists and representatives of pedagogical science D.V. Zinoviev (2006) and others. They focused on education of tolerance in children and adolescents through motivation of behavior.

Interethnic tolerance of students received its consideration by a wide range of researchers. Such aspects as a place of tolerance in the system of values among students were considered by E.V. Krivtsova and T.N. Martynova (2007), S.V. Ustavschikova (2007). Ethnic tolerance of university students and specific ethnic groups have been highlighted in the works of V.I. Pishchik and A.A. Koshevaya (2005), D.V. Sklyarova (2006), V.A. Vinichenko (2009). The issues of ethnic tolerance formation directly in the learning process at universities were investigated by V.G. Gimaliyev (2006), A.A. Shabanova (2006), P.I. Babochkin and V.A. Rodionov (2000). Significant importance for implementation of our study objectives have the works of V.V. Zateev and I.I. Osinskiy (1997), N.V. Shemyakina (2002), V.G. Zakirova and L.A. Kamalova (2016), L.R. Kayumova & V.G. Zakirova (2016) devoted to the study of student community, taking into account its national and regional particularities.

We can note the studies of Kazakh scientists K.Z. Kozhakhmetova and M.S. Yunusova (2006), Z.B. Kabylbekova (2000), Z.Z. Nauryzbay (2008) and others dealing with multicultural education.

## METHODS

During the research the following methods were used:

- theoretical: the study of regulatory, methodical documents on the researched topic; analysis and study of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical, scientific-methodological and sociological literature, systematization, modeling;
- empirical: pedagogical and psychological monitoring of interpersonal relations in student groups; monitoring of pedagogical process, questioning, discussion, analysis of student performance, learning and generalization of teaching experience, pedagogical experiment, sociological survey, monitoring of inter-ethnic tolerance level.

In order to identify the level of the 1st year students of the Kazakh National Agrarian University inter-ethnic tolerance we developed the express-questionnaire “Are you tolerant to other nations?”. As a basis was taken questionnaire “Tolerance index” (Soldatova & Shaygerova, 2003) in the part dealing with identifying level of ethnic tolerance/intolerance (attitude towards people of different ethnicity and race, to their own ethnic group, cultural distance estimation).

The survey involved 427 1st year students of Kazakh and Russian departments of KazNAU. Respondents were given forms with questions, and the necessary instructions for their completion was conducted.

Individual or group evaluation of the detected tolerance level is carried out according to the following steps:

8-15 “+” – high level of tolerance. Representatives of this group have strong features of tolerant personality.

TABLE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS OF THE KAZAKH BRANCH  
 QUESTIONNAIRE for students of the Kazakh branch  
 Personal information: Age: Gender: Department:

1	Do you think that your people is better than any other?	- yes (-) - no (+) - don't know
2	A man should be judged only by his moral and professional qualities, but not on his nationality.	- agree (+) - disagree (-) - don't know
3	What is your attitude to representatives of other nationalities?	- good (+) - poor (-) - don't know
4	Do you consider that nationality in choosing friends is not significant?	- agree (+) - disagree (-) - don't know
5	What is your attitude towards interethnic marriages in love?	- approve (+) - do not approve (-) - I do not care
6	The peoples which have their homeland outside of Kazakhstan should go over there?	- agree (-) - disagree (+) - don't know
7	True patriots of Kazakhstan may be only Kazakhs?	- agree (-) - disagree (+) - don't know
8	Should the people who are not indigenous by nationality but living in Kazakhstan be proficient in the state language?	- agree (-) - disagree (+) - don't know
9	One should not divide nations into good and bad, as any nation has both good and bad people.	- agree (+) - disagree (-) - don't know
10	Incitement of ethnic hatred is a crime which must be severely punished.	- agree (+) - disagree (-) - don't know
11	What is your attitude towards people of other nationalities (our citizens) who do not know Kazakh language?	- good (+) - poor (-) - don't know
12	Knowledge of the Russian language gives new information and contributes to outlook development.	- agree (+) - disagree (-) - don't know
14	You think that knowledge of the Russian language in Kazakhstan is...	- necessary (+) - necessary but not everywhere - not necessary (-)
15	Traditions, customs, religion of any people deserve respect even if they seem to be unusual.	- agree (+) - disagree (-) - don't know

0-7 “+” – average level of tolerance. These results show the respondents who are characterized by a combination of both tolerant and intolerant features.

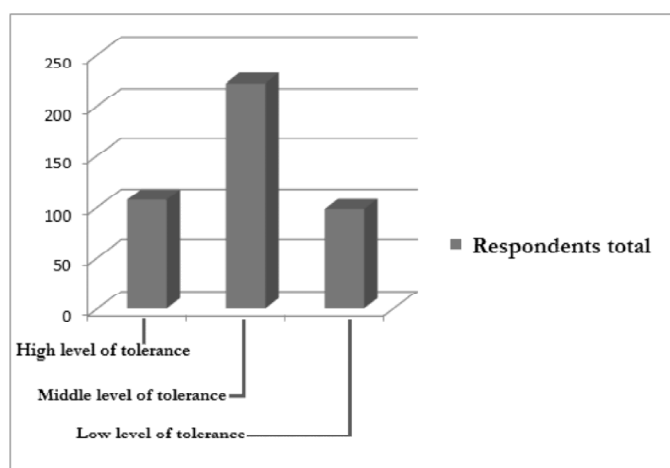
5-15 “-” – low level of tolerance. These results indicate a high intolerance of a human being and presence of highly expressed intolerant attitudes toward people of other nationalities.

The questionnaire data reveal man’s attitude towards other ethnic groups and lines in the field of intercultural communication (see. Table 1).

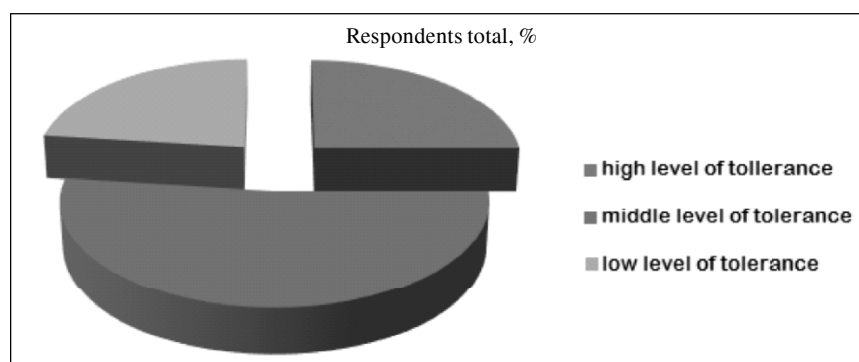
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After investigation the following results were obtained:

Among the 427 respondents the low level of tolerance was revealed in 23% (98 people), 52% showed the average level (222), and 25% demonstrate the highest level of tolerance (107) (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).



**Figure 1:** The level of inter-ethnic tolerance in KazNAU students



**Figure 2:** The level of interethnic tolerance of KazNAU students (in percentage)



The criteria for the level of interethnic tolerance formation in students were developed.

In determining extent of interethnic tolerance formation the following structure of levels may be allocated: low, medium (multicultural-oriented), high (multicultural-valuable and personally meaningful) (see. Table 2).

TABLE 2: CRITERIA FOR THE LEVEL OF INTERETHNIC TOLERANCE FORMATION

<i>Level</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Low level	negative attitudes and rejection of inoculture, violation of multicultural standards, lack of knowledge about cultures of other nations, manifestation of intolerance
Middle (multicultural-oriented) level	situational interest in knowing features of integrated cultural and linguistic situation, unstable and incomplete knowledge of ethnic and world culture
High (multicultural-valuable and personally meaningful) level	awareness of intercultural dialogue value and respect to language and culture of other nations

Thus, the results of the concluded survey allow to conclude the following:

Most of the 1st year students demonstrated insufficient level of tolerance due to the fact that before entering the University they did not have conditions for interaction with representatives of other ethnic groups, lack of knowledge about the culture of other nations, absence of motivation to communicate with them. Investigation of the general tolerance level with the help of represented questionnaires showed that the majority of students are characterized by below-average and average levels of tolerance.

### IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings have significant scientific, practical and socio-cultural effect in terms of improving the climate in the institution of higher education.

Results of the study allow to provide the following steps:

- implementation of the developed within the project framework integrated system of interactive educational tools for the formation of interethnic tolerance in the higher educational institution;
- monitoring the level of interethnic tolerance formation among the students;
- dissemination of experience on creation of multicultural educational space in the university in order to implement the Kazakhstan model of interethnic consent;
- testing and implementation into the educational process teaching materials for the formation of inter-ethnic tolerance in the higher educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Recommendations for the implementation of research results: In order to create inter-ethnic tolerance among students it is recommended to carry out complex of educational and training measures promoting the idea of inter-ethnic harmony both within learning process, and during extracurricular time.

## CONCLUSIONS

The issue of interethnic tolerance formation becomes most relevant in our days when social and ethnic tensions in the world is extremely high, especially in societies with heterogeneous ethnic composition. That is why it is necessary to identify and use effective tools of preventing confrontation processes and formation of interethnic tolerance. Ability to resolve inter-ethnic conflicts in a constructive way should be one of the main tasks of education. In this sense, “multicultural university environment” is a special atmosphere which promotes involvement of young people in their business and interpersonal contacts, forms the space of positive interaction among individuals, different ethnic groups, cultures, religions, etc. A higher educational institution is an establishment with multicultural contingent including mixed-age, multi-ethnic and multi-faith composition. Interethnic tolerance of students is forming in the process of learning foreign language communication (in this case: Russian language in Kazakh groups, and Kazakh language in Russian groups) taking into account cultural and mental differences of native speakers. Foreign language communication involves interaction of two cultures in several ways: familiarity with culture of the target language country through language itself and learning behavioral model of foreign language culture carriers. Awareness of the possible problems occurring in intercultural communication of different cultures, understanding of values and accepted norms of behavior are quite significant factors for the formation of inter-ethnic tolerance. Student’s ability to refract cultural values in his/her behavior contributes to the formation of his/her identity as a multicultural personality, who is able to interact effectively with people of different cultures, correctly recognize mixed signals and anticipate consequences of words and actions. While watching interethnic communication among students one can note different groups of factors determining behavior of individuals in intergroup contact: personal (personal characteristics and lines); situational (context in which the interaction takes its place); group (community structure culture characteristics which belong to individuals included in contact list).

Formation of tolerant attitude to representatives of other ethnic groups, respect for their culture, customs and traditions in younger generation is the basis of pedagogical activities. An effective tool of interethnic tolerance formation among students of agrarian university is the study of ethnic culture of the peoples living in Kazakhstan. For this purpose, we used the innovative pedagogical training and education techniques: competitions and quizzes on knowledge of languages and cultures of the peoples of Kazakhstan, carrying out Language Feast, essay writing,

learning of poems, proverbs and sayings, role-playing games, round tables, debates, theater performances based on folk tales, customs and traditions, etc. The described pedagogical techniques facilitate the process of integration of students into multicultural environment. As a result of their usage, multicultural educational environment is forming in higher educational institution contributing to formation of a multicultural identity, implementation of students' individual needs in cross-cultural communication and assimilation of different cultural experiences, expansion of perspective personality development.

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