

## STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP POLICULTURAL COMPETENCE OF MASTER STUDENTS THROUGH PAREMIOLOGICAL UNITS

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**Abstract:** This article explores effective strategies for developing policultural competence in Master's level students through the use of paremiological units such as proverbs, sayings, and aphorisms. The results showed a statistically significant increase in measures of policultural competence. Qualitative analysis revealed that the students gained deeper insights into cultural values and communication styles. Integrating paremiological units into the curriculum, particularly through comparative analysis and experiential learning activities, is recommended as an impactful strategy to build policultural competence.

**Keywords:** Policultural competence, paremiological units, cultural diversity, graduate education, internationalization.

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada maqollar va aforizmlar kabi paremiologik birliklardan foydalanish orqali Magistratura talabalarida siyosiy-madaniy kompetensiyani rivojlantirishning samarali strategiyalari ko'rib chiqilgan. Natijalar siyosat-madaniy vakolat choralarining statistik jihatdan sezilarli darajada oshganligini ko'rsatdi. Sifatli tahlil shuni ko'rsatdiki, talabalar madaniy qadriyatlar va muloqot uslublari haqida chuqurroq ma'lumotga ega bo'lishdi. Paremiologik birliklarni o'quv dasturiga kiritish, xususan qiyosiy tahlil va tajribaviy ta'lim faoliyati orqali, siyosiy madaniy kompetensiyani shakllantirish uchun ta'sirchan strategiya sifatida tavsiya etiladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Siyosiy madaniy kompetensiya, paremiologik birliklar, madaniy xilma-xillik, magistratura ta'limi, xalqarolashtirish

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматриваются эффективные стратегии развития поликультурной компетентности у студентов магистратуры посредством использования паремнологических единиц, таких как пословицы, поговорки и афоризмы. Результаты показали статистически значимое повышение показателей поликультурной компетентности. Качественный анализ показал, что учащиеся получили более глубокое представление о культурных ценностях и стилях общения. Включение паремнологических единиц в учебную программу, в частности, посредством сравнительного анализа и практических занятий, рекомендуется в качестве эффективной стратегии для формирования поликультурной компетентности.

**Ключевые слова:** Поликультурная компетентность, паремнологические единицы, культурное разнообразие, высшее образование, интернационализация.

### INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, developing policultural competence - the ability to effectively interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds - has become a crucial skill, particularly for those pursuing graduate level education [1]. Paremiological units, which include proverbs, sayings, idiomatic expressions and aphorisms, offer a rich avenue for developing policultural competence as they provide insights into the values, beliefs, and wisdom of different cultures [2]. While there is a growing body of literature on the importance of policultural competence, there is a paucity of research on specific strategies to develop this competence in Master's level students and the role that paremiological units can play. This article aims to address this gap by

investigating effective strategies for utilizing paremiological units to enhance the policultural competence of Master's students.

#### **METHODS AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify best practices in developing policultural competence in higher education, with a focus on the use of paremiological units. Databases including ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar were searched using keywords such as "policultural competence," "cross-cultural communication," "paremiological units," and "graduate education." A total of 35 relevant articles were identified and analyzed.

In addition, a mixed-methods study was conducted with a sample of some Master's students from diverse cultural backgrounds at a large public university in Uzbekistan. The study included a pre and post-assessment of policultural competence using the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) [3], as well as qualitative interviews with a subset of 15 students to gain deeper insights into their learning experiences.

The intervention involved integrating paremiological units from a variety of cultures into a graduate level course on intercultural communication over a semester. Students engaged in comparative analysis of proverbs and sayings, reflective writing, and experiential learning activities such as role-plays and simulations.

#### **RESULTS**

The results of the pre and post-assessment showed a statistically significant increase in the students' scores on the MPQ, suggesting an enhancement in their policultural competence. The average score increased from 3.2 to 4.1 on a 5-point scale ( $p < 0.001$ ).

The qualitative interviews revealed several key themes. Students reported gaining a deeper appreciation for the wisdom embedded in paremiological units and how they reflect cultural values and norms. They also noted that comparative analysis of proverbs from different cultures helped them identify both common themes and unique perspectives. The experiential learning activities were highlighted as particularly impactful in terms of developing practical skills for cross-cultural communication and negotiation.

#### **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study suggest that integrating paremiological units into the curriculum can be an effective strategy for developing policultural competence in Master's level students. The quantitative results demonstrate a measurable improvement in competence, while the qualitative findings provide insight into the learning processes and outcomes.

The literature review supports these findings, with several studies highlighting the value of using proverbs and sayings for cultural learning [4][5]. However, this study extends the existing research by focusing specifically on Master's level students and investigating the impact of a targeted intervention.

The comparative analysis of paremiological units emerges as a key element of the learning process. By examining similarities and differences in proverbs from various cultures, students gain a more nuanced understanding of cultural diversity and develop skills in perspective-taking [6]. The experiential learning activities provide opportunities to apply this understanding in practical contexts.

The results also suggest that the effectiveness of using paremiological units for developing policultural competence may be influenced by several factors, such as the diversity of the proverbs selected, the depth of the comparative analysis, and the design of the experiential learning activities. The qualitative interviews indicate that students found the proverbs that were more culturally distant from their own backgrounds to be particularly eye-opening and challenging to their assumptions.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the importance of creating a safe and inclusive learning environment when engaging with culturally sensitive topics. Some students reported initial

discomfort or hesitation in discussing certain proverbs that touched on controversial issues such as gender roles or religious beliefs. However, they also noted that the respectful and open dialogue facilitated by the instructor helped them navigate these challenges and gain a more complex understanding of cultural differences.

The study also raises questions about how to assess policultural competence in a comprehensive and authentic way. While the MPQ provides a validated measure, it is based on self-reported perceptions and may not fully capture the practical skills and behaviors associated with effective intercultural communication. Incorporating performance-based assessments, such as observed interactions or problem-solving tasks, could provide additional insight into students' competence development.

Overall, the analysis of the findings suggests that paremiological units are a promising pedagogical tool for enhancing policultural competence in Master's level students, but their effectiveness depends on careful selection, meaningful comparative analysis, and thoughtful integration into the broader curriculum. The results also underscore the importance of attending to the affective dimensions of cultural learning and creating supportive environments for exploring diverse perspectives.

### CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates the potential of paremiological units as a tool for developing policultural competence in Master's level students. The findings suggest that integrating proverbs, sayings, and aphorisms into the curriculum, particularly through comparative analysis and experiential learning activities, can lead to measurable gains in competence.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that educators in Master's programs consider incorporating paremiological units into their courses, especially those focused on intercultural communication or global issues. This can be done through readings, discussions, reflective assignments, and simulations.

However, it is important to recognize the limitations of this study, including the small sample size and single institutional context. Further research with larger and more diverse samples, as well as in different educational settings, would help to strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

In conclusion, as universities aim to prepare graduates for success in a globalized world, developing policultural competence should be a key priority. Paremiological units offer a rich and accessible resource for this purpose, and this study provides evidence for their effectiveness in enhancing the competence of Master's level students.

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