

Tărna Ecaterina Alexandru,
"I. Creangă ", State Pedagogical University Chisinau, Moldova
Tănăsescu Cristina Florentina,
"Nicolae Iorga" Theoretical High School Nehoiu, Buzau, Romania
DOI: 10.24411/2470-1262-2020-10084
УДК (UDC)

For citation: Geladze Darejan, Tkidze Maia, (2020).
Modeling Virtual Classroom Environment for Teaching English Language.
Cross-Cultural Studies: Education and Science
Vol.5, Issue 4 (2020), pp.....(in USA)

Manuscript received 24/02/2020

Accepted for publication: 17/03/2020

The authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

CC BY 4.0

**THE EFFICIENCY OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN THE
PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIOCULTURAL INTEGRATION**

**ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬ КОММУНИКАТИВНЫХ НАВЫКОВ В
ПЕРСПЕКТИВЕ СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНОЙ ИНТЕГРАЦИИ**

Abstract:

This article analyzes various concepts regarding *the efficiency of communicative competences for the purpose of socio-cultural integration*. In addition, this article contains

some of the results of our research, justifying the need to implement a *Program for improving the communication skills from the perspective of the socio-cultural integration of adolescents*. The experimental group consisted of 104 adolescents from pre-university educational institutions. Our understanding is that in order to cope with the rapid changes that are taking place in the world, it is necessary to approach the concept of *education for sociocultural integration* from a modern, broader perspective, with the role of making available to each student activities for *optimizing the process of socio-cultural integration*, focused on capitalizing on modern communication strategies, so that the student can discover the true values of diversity. From our perspective, advantageously placed as an observer, the teacher can greatly help the student by improving the communicative skills for the socio-cultural integration. In addition, due to the specificity of the educational environment, the difficulties of socio-cultural integration are rarely analyzed, and the multiculturalism analyzed only by the aspect of belonging to different ethnic groups, without having a methodology for assessing the level of socio-cultural integration or a *Program for improving the communicative competences from the perspective of socio-cultural integration of students*. In our vision, the supposed results of the research reside in the efficiency of the communicative competences for the sociocultural integration of the students who attend high school. The implementation of the Program of efficiency of the communicative and organizational competences from the perspective of the sociocultural integration of the adolescents ensures the prevention, the diminution and the overcoming of the difficulties of socio-cultural integration in the school environment; the application of the research results can be useful in the modernization of the school curricula in the intercultural context.

Keywords: communicative skills, educational environment, integration, socio-cultural integration, socialization, feedback, feed-forward, intercultural context

Introduction

Socio-cultural integration manifests itself as a fundamental social and cultural process, different from one culture to another, from one level of social organization to another. In our vision, the process of socio-cultural integration depends largely on the efficiency of the communicative competences, on the compliance with the basic sociocultural norms and values, but at the same time, this order is not permanently fixed, being subject to permanent changes and transformations. The notion of socio-cultural integration has a multidimensional nature materialized in aspects of educational, communication, organizational, relational, attitudinal and behavioral aspects. In addition, any educational

interaction involves certain forms of communication and depends on our ability to communicate with other people. This allows us to formulate concrete or abstract ideas, to speak or write about certain objects, persons, even in their absence. When it comes to defining communication, most people think of "making it known", "giving news" or "informing", but this process is much more complex. Although the analysis of the communication varies depending on the context or frame of reference used and the emphasis placed on some aspects of the process, all include the involvement of the following elements: the sender, the receiver, a mode of transmission, a message and an effect. This elementary model must be extended, however, because communication never ends with the mere taking or receiving of information. In the educational environment, communication also has the role of putting students in touch with each other, in the space in which they learn and develop. In addition, any communication process has a threefold dimension: externalized communication (verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal actions observable by the interlocutors), metacommunication (what is understood beyond words) and intracommunication (the communication made by each individual in its inner forum, at the level of the self). Therefore, socio-cultural integration is built in correlation with the ability to process information correctly and with the development of communicative skills. In addition, an incorrect assessment or insufficient knowledge of their communication skills have a negative impact on the process of socio-cultural integration. It seems to be elementary to communicate, to convince someone to make a certain statement, but during communication it is increasingly difficult to listen to someone without judging them, to convince them to express their emotions and to express themselves or share their feelings. We must emphasize that the attempt to investigate the level of socio-cultural integration of the student in the educational environment cannot be achieved without analyzing the relational-value indicators, such as: school adaptation, positive perception of the group, student-student and teacher-student relations, communicative competences and organizational, assimilation of moral values, etc. For example, for effective socio-cultural integration in the educational environment, it is necessary to adapt rapidly in the school group, and for this it is necessary to know the evolution of sociability, which, in turn, requires the knowledge of the communication potential. In this sense, the teacher should not be the only transmitter of information, and the student should not be the only receiver of it. The development of communication skills creates a positive self-image, which is immediately reflected in the efficiency of the actions we take in establishing relationships with those around us.

Theories and methods

In the opinion of E. Țărnă [15, p. 34], the new models of communication depart from the initial models of information theory and of the behaviorists model that limited the communication to the transmission and reception of one way messages, that circulated in a single channel, at the same time with a passive receiver. The definition and approach of communication has been enriched by the elaboration of complex models that took into account the *circularity of communication* (the alternation of the participants in the communication process in the roles of transmitter and receiver), the individual differences in mastering the communication codes, the role of opinions and attitudes in the communication process, the importance of the social and cultural context of the exchange of information, including in the case of socio-cultural integration. Therefore, more important than the contents of the communication are the interactions of the participants in the communication and the interdependencies between all their behaviors. As we can deduct from above, the way we try to interact with others, to integrate ourselves in the socio-cultural environment, can awaken the likes or dislikes, success or failure, etc. In these cases, the development of strategies for socio-cultural integration through the efficiency of the communicative competences plays an important role in remedying the situations of non-integration, favoring the development of positive relationships, considering that, most of the times, the antipathy is unjustified and develops from an inability to integrate and communicate.

Numerous attempts to define the concept of communication have involved various nuances and connotations, being important for the development of communicative competences from the perspective of socio-cultural integration. Thus, the followers of the semiotic school (Peirce, Ogden, Richards, Saussure) do not consider misunderstandings as necessarily effects of communication failure, but consider that they may result from the cultural differences between the transmitter and the receiver [1, 2, 9, 11].

The definitions of communication have been grouped into certain typologies, depending on how one component or another of the communication is emphasized. The very etymology of the term suggests this fact; the word communication comes from the Latin language, from the word *communis* with the sense of transmitting to others, to be in a relationship. Although the term is of Latin origin, the Greeks had their first practical concerns for communication. For them, the art of the word, the skill of building your speech and expressing it was an indispensable condition of the status of citizen.

In this order of ideas, we must recognize that the interlocutors are influenced by their peers, having the same attitudes and behaviors, but they are also influenced by those

with characteristics and behaviors different from theirs, insofar as they lack them, but they would like to have them (complementarity generating attractiveness), and any relationship has varying degrees of depth. Thus, a low level of communication determines a superficial or formal (and conversely) relationship. The degree of depth (authenticity) of a relationship is controlled by each of us and is the subject of a personal choice. For example, if I like colleague *X*, I try to communicate with him; if I want to avoid *X*, I try to interact with him as little as possible; if I want to join a group of students, I try to communicate with as many colleagues and with *X*. With certainty, the way we relate to others and the way we communicate determines the level of socio-cultural integration; any attitude of ours reveals something about us and causes a response from others.

In studies that approach the issue of communication skills, the use of syntagms of the *communicative competence type*, *communication competence*, and *communication skills* are used. In order to specify the term *communication competence*, it is necessary to highlight the conceptual distinction between *communication ability*, *communication aptitude*, *communication competence*. Therefore, in the specialized literature, the syntagma of *communication capacity* refers to the following components: native - characterized by all the physical / psychic and social communicative predispositions - developed by training and learning the communication rules; whereas, the competence of communication is a result of the acquisition of knowledge, habits, skills, aptitudes, attitudes and temperamental-characteristic traits with which the individual is "gifted" in order to fulfill his social function, being acquired by assimilating information and training communication skills [4, p. 28].

As we can see, the difference between the *communication capacity* and the *communication competence* is evidenced by the fact that the first is genetically determined, being hereditary, the second acquired through education, being a product of learning. At the same time, the distinction also results from the fact that, in the case of *communication capacity*, we are talking about a potentiality, something that exists or that can be cultivated and developed. In the case of *communication competence*, habits, skills and attitudes must be formed on an adequate cognitive support, to capitalize on the native predispositions. It follows, in conclusion, that the distinction between *communication ability* and *communication competence* is similar to the relationship between hereditary and acquired [4].

The author T. Slama-Cazacu defines the concept of *communicative competence* by: "the ability to present one's own intentions, needs, interests in the communication process, as well as to perceive the interlocutor, in order to initiate a dialogue. In education, the ability to

communicate determines the understanding between the teacher and the student in order to reach the goals and to carry out the learning activity” [14].

In the acceptance of the author T. Callo [1, p. 58], a communication is limited each time to the satisfaction provoked and maintained or amplified by the two parties, the essential feature being the relational dimension. In this order of ideas, the teacher must have rational answers to the student's requests, to develop communication and engagement both in the activities that require educational effort and in the recreational activities. Therefore, the quality of the teacher-specific communication in the process of socio-cultural integration of the student in the educational environment also depends on the level of development of the didactic communication competence [9, 11, 12, 13, 14]. In this order of ideas, two representative dimensions of communication competence are outlined: *discursive* and *relational*, highlighting the complex network of their synchronization. Therefore, the efficiency of the *communicative competences* in the perspective of the socio-cultural integration constitutes the initiation of a set of communicative behaviors of elaboration / transmission / evaluation of the didactic discourse and of ensuring productive communicative networks in the educational context.

According to the author Ioan Cerghit [2, p.61]: “Communication has always been a main component of education, an indispensable support for education. Receptive to the progress of human communication, the long-standing practice of the school has never ceased to approach and intelligently integrate different verbal and nonverbal forms and means into its procedural structures.” As we can see the development of *communicative competences* for socio-cultural integration is achieved using the contents specific to the action of effective learning and involves a bilateral teacher-student, student-student, following *non-evaluative feedback*, which requires flexibility of roles, an interaction and not just a process of influence, determining the extent to which the message was understood, believed and accepted. Therefore, by its characteristic the term of communication includes the phenomenon of feedback. *Feedback* is the process that allows a balance to be maintained in a system [8, p. 1040]. In the specialized literature, two distinguishable forms of feedback are used. *Feedback* is widely discussed both in communication theory, as well as in psycho-pedagogy and a less analyzed more recent term *feedforward*. In order to make communication skills more efficient in the perspective of socio-cultural integration, it is necessary to provide both the *feedback* and the *feedforward* that will allow the student to expose his reactions, to gain confidence in his own competences, to develop, which will favor the process of group adaptation and higher performance achievement.

These can be applied as tools that we can easily handle if we know their mechanisms and techniques of use. In this sense, within the group of students is built a dynamic environment conducive to establishing interpersonal relationships, which involves the process of socio-cultural integration, information, action and creativity, an environment that makes it possible to manifest performances: attitudes of cooperation, organizational and organizational skills, joint decision making, respect for the opinions of others, individual and collective responsibilities. To this end, the student must be oriented towards the development of the process of socio-cultural integration, which involves a continuous struggle of transformation and restructuring of the potential, of social competences, of individual qualities, being a process of active and efficient integration of students in educational activities, in social groups and socio-cultural life. Analyzing various theories regarding the integration process, we should mention that most authors cited above highlight certain types of social integration: 1) *cultural integration* - aims to achieve the harmonization of values regarding the behavior and the interdependence between values, behaviors and social institutions; 2) *normative integration* - refers to the integration between norms and persons. Its opposite is the state of anomie, of conflicts between norms, of incompatibility between norms and individuals; 3) *communication integration* - aims at a system of defining relationships for the agreement between behaviors and norms. In the communication processes the concrete individual with his psychic, characteristics and the concrete social environment with his active particularities are employed simultaneously. Psychosocial effects appear strongly in the aspect of positive or negative indicators; 4) *functional integration* - refers to the unity and balance of the social system, the division and synchronization of values in a group. In this order of ideas, both students and teachers need to be aware that socio-cultural integration involves continuous learning, communication, mobility and adaptability, personal initiative, leadership, role-play, etc. [5, 6, 7, 10, 12]

Results

Some lack of communication symptoms in the process of socio-cultural integration can be directly observed. For example, students are unnerving when they speak to a large audience, with strangers or other ethnic groups; they are shy and devoid of initiative, waiting others to take the first step. Regarding the results of the researches, our aim is to reveal certain aspects regarding the development of ways to make communication skills more efficient, emphasizing their role in the perspective of socio-cultural integration.

The research carried out in the 2019-2020 school year, on an experimental group of 104 adolescents from pre-university education institutions, allowed us to find that: 27% were socio-culturally integrated students, and 32% had various socio-cultural integration difficulties. The research variables were the degree of school adaptation, the level of communicative and organizational skills, the degree of satisfaction regarding the student's life, social avoidance, social anxiety, affective experiences, and use of integration strategies, cultural values, self-confidence, stress and resistance to change. Referring to the researched students, we observe that they must go through a process of socio-cultural integration by making a double effort: to raise awareness of the meanings and rules of the school group and to unconditionally accept this environment, in order to bring it closer to their values scale. Analyzing the data obtained, we find that socio-cultural subjects that accept cultural diversity will be easier to integrate tend to become actively involved in the groups life and comply with the norms that most propose. Starting from the idea that communicating means expressing what you feel, that is, your inner world and, in order to overcome the communication difficulties faced by students in the process of socio-cultural integration, we offered each student the opportunity to identify their own barriers to communication and the level of communication skills.

In order to highlight possible communication barriers encountered by students in the process of socio-cultural integration, students were proposed to identify the communication barriers they may have while networking and which they consider important in the process of socio-cultural integration.

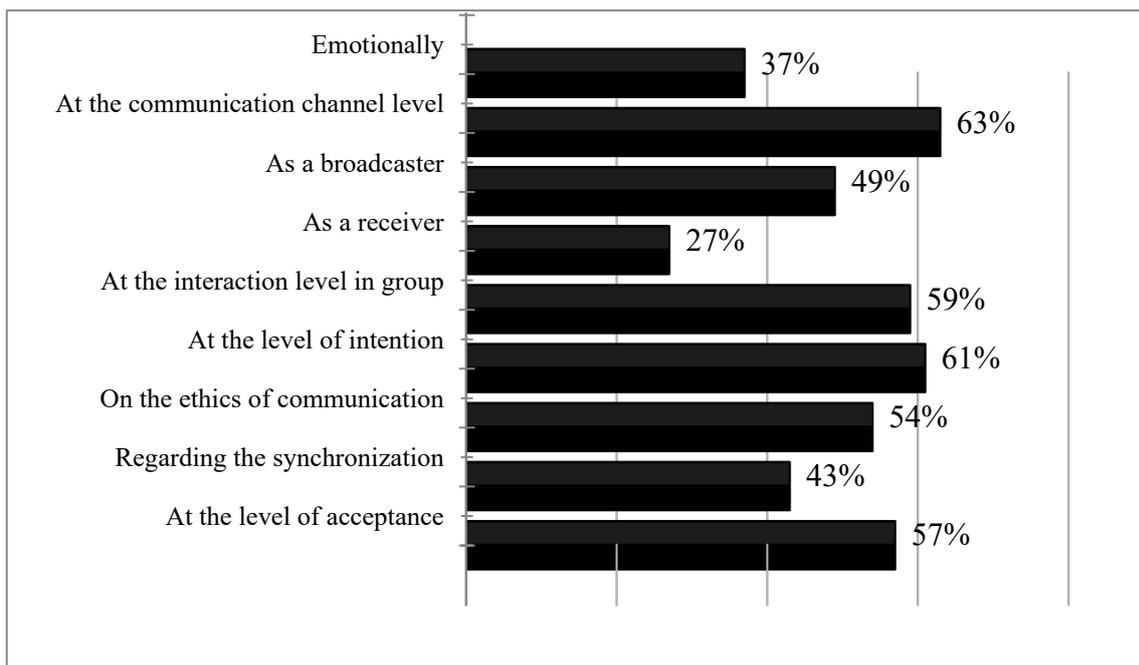


Figure 1.

The presented results confirm that most students identify with having several communication difficulties in the process of socio-cultural integration. Therefore, all the students identified certain barriers, which leads us to affirm that the socio-cultural integration also implies the knowledge of certain strategies to overcome the communication barriers. Of course, this can be the consequence of the low level of development of the communicative skills, but also of an emotional liability with a tendency towards high emotionality, and for this reason, the student is often blocked. These bottlenecks negatively affect their learning ability and aspirations. In the activities, the student is deprived of his own success, and this reduces the intellectual security that is an absolute necessity for the socio-cultural integration.

Another topical aspect discussed concerns the factual state existing at the time of initiating the experimental investigation regarding the *level of communicative skills*. Therefore, we offered students the opportunity to find out their *level of communicative skills*. For this purpose, the respondents were offered the *COS Questionnaire* (V. Sinevski, B. Fedorişin), adapted by Carolina Platon [10].

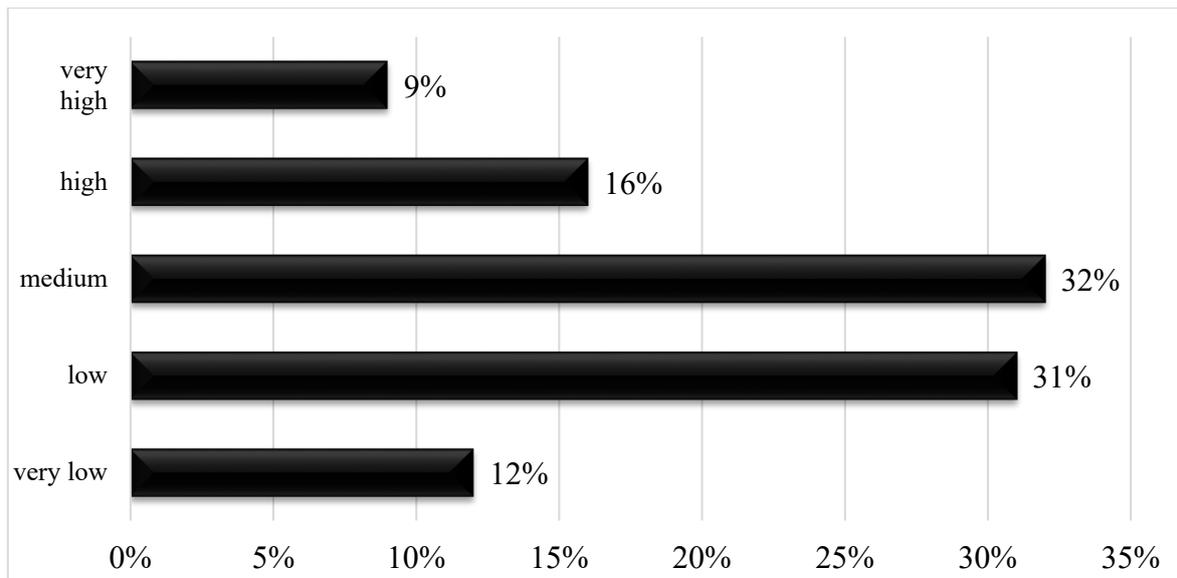


Figure 2. Level of communicative skills (finding experiment)

As we can see in Figure 2, a small number of students 9% showed a very high *level of communicative skills*, showing a low interest in the established indicators; 12% of the students showed a very low level, expressing non-involvement, inactivity or confinement in themselves, they do not communicate, they try to stay alone and solve the task, they rarely offer help to their colleagues; 31% showed a low level and they are the ones who have many difficulties in communication, they hide their eyes, they speak little and rarely, they are shy, they often feel "worthless", they are not interested in certain activities as to avoid integration failure, they are critical, they are nervous, they show dissatisfaction with those around them. The obtained results showed a small difference between the low and the average level: 31% of the students have some communication skills and are sometimes open to networking; 16% of the students demonstrated a high level, being prone to communication and networking. Obviously, the importance of communication in the process of socio-cultural integration is fundamental and it is about organizing the interaction between those who communicate, that is, in exchange not only for knowledge, ideas, but also for the acceptance of diversity and cooperation. Thus, based on the data represented in Figure 2, we can justify the need to implement a *Program for improving the communicative and organizational skills from the perspective of the socio-cultural integration of adolescents*.

Discussions and implications

One of the prerequisites for preventing and eliminating the difficulties of socio-cultural integration knows their causes. Due to the specific nature of the educational environment, these difficulties are often encountered, in particular, for the newcomer. These

difficulties vary from student to student as duration, intensity, manner of manifestation. We highlight the main observable manifestations of the respective difficulties: *in the behavioral plane* - absenteeism, isolation, fatigue, inhibition, restraint, hostility; *in the cognitive plane* - difficulties of concentration, superficial thinking, decreased motivation, lack of communication, disinterest; *in the affective-volitive plane* - depression, discouragement, excessive fear, emotional lability, inappropriate affective reactions, etc. The approach of improving the *communicative competences in the perspective of the socio-cultural integration* constituted as a basis for the elaboration and implementation of the *School Program for the optional discipline "Communication-the key of the socio-cultural integration"*.

The school program "Communication, the key to socio-cultural integration" is an optional curricular offered in high schools, and is targeting 11th grade students, during one school year, designed for one hour a week. This school program is an opportunity to realize an efficient exchange of experiences and opinions regarding both the preparation of adolescents, but also for the teaching staff, as well as being aligned with the educational reform requirement for a better socio-cultural integration. The optional discipline addresses the issue of socio-cultural integration by setting several objectives: ensuring the right to education for social and cultural integration of all students in pre-university education, developing the protection framework for adolescents, correlating educational-instructive activities in order to integrate youth into economic and social processes development from different areas, protecting, capitalizing and developing cultural and historical values, modernizing the institutional system, emphasizing the role of culture in forming the participative-cohesive spirit of the students, protecting and preserving the historical heritage of special architectural value, promoting the cultural values of the country internationally, achieving a stable, participative, moral and cohesive school environment, necessary support for socio-cultural integration. This option can make a significant contribution to the development of key competences formulated in the "Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union on the key competences from the perspective of lifelong learning (2006/962 / EC): communion in the mother tongue, social and civic competences, spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression, communication in foreign languages, learning to learn.

There are six components of *communication competences* outlined in the EU language policies as identified by Claude Simard [16, p. 217] that converge to define the curricular model of the discipline:

1. The *verbal component* that integrates all the components of the language (the linguistic dimension, a textual dimension and a discursive dimension);
2. The *cognitive component* whose role is to identify the intellectual operations involved in the production and understanding of the language;
3. The *encyclopedic component* that requires the knowledge of the linguistic, textual, discursive aspects specific to certain fields of human activity: history, technique, etc .;
4. The *ideological component* whose role is to develop the capacity to situate ourselves and react to various ideas, values, attitudes, principles conveyed through discourse;
5. The literary component operates literary references and highlights the capabilities of exploiting the individual verbal creativity;
6. The *socio-affective component* develops the feelings and attitudes that can influence the verbal behavior of each one.

Besides implementing the above competencies the program, also addresses specific competences that are formulated according to the model of the National Program, of the common block subjects, complementing them with educational activities supporting the development of communicative and organizational competences from the perspective of the sociocultural integration in high schools, in the context of the interactive learning situations at the microsocial and macrosocial level.

Conclusions

Synthesizing the ideas formulated along the way, we must mention that the scientific novelty of the research is objectified by: determining the theoretical and praxiological foundations by offering an investigative approach to make the communicative competences more efficient in the context of socio-cultural integration. In our vision, the development of communicative competences favors the sociocultural integration of the high school students, and the implementation of the *Program of efficiency of the communicative competences from the perspective of the socio-cultural integration* of the adolescents ensures the decrease, prevention, and overcoming of the difficulties of socio-cultural integration in the school environment. As we have specified in this article, socio-cultural integration includes psychological, social and organizational educational implications, ensuring the right to education of all students, offering them opportunities for personal development. In our vision, a successful process of socio-cultural integration will contain special programs in which all students and teachers will be invited to participate. The application of the research results can be useful in the modernization of school curricula in the context of interculturality.

References:

1. Callo T. Educația comunicării verbale. Chișinău: Litera, 2003.
2. Cerghit I. Sisteme de instruire alternative și complementare: structuri, stiluri și strategii. Iași: Polirom, 2008.
3. Cojocaru-Borozan M. Comunicare relațională. Chișinău: UPSC, 2009.
4. Cojocaru-Borozan M., Țărnă E., Sadovei L. Integrare socioprofesională prin discurs didactico-științific. Chișinău: UPSC, 2014.
5. Fiske J. Introducere în științele comunicării. Iași: Polirom, 2003.
6. Golu M. Dinamica personalității. București: GENEZE, 2003, p.137
7. Golu M. Fundamente psihologice. București: România de Mâine, 2000. 327 p.
8. Larousse, Marele dicționar al psihologiei. București: Editura Trei, 2006.
9. Pânișoară I. O. *Comunicarea eficientă. Metode de interacțiune educațională*. Iași: Polirom, 2004.
10. Platon C. Serviciul psihologic școlar. Chișinău: Epigraf, 2001.
11. Pruteanu Șt. Antrenamentul abilităților de comunicare. Iași: Polirom, 2005.
12. Sadovei L. Competența de comunicare didactică. Repere epistemologice și metodologice. Chișinău: UPS „Ion Creangă”, 2008.
13. Sadovei L., Boțan A. Ghid de autoformare a culturii comunicării pedagogice. Chișinău: Garomont-Studio, 2013.
14. Slama-Cazacu T. Psiholingvistica, o știință a comunicării. București: ALL, 1999.
15. Țărnă E. *Bazele comunicării. Curs universitar*. Ediția a II-a, Chișinău: Prut Internațional, 2017, 408 p. ISBN 978-9975-54-335-2
16. Claude Simard, Jean-Louis Dufays, Joaquim Dolz, Claudine Garcia-Debanc *Didactique du français langue première*. Louvain-la-Neuve: De Boeck Supérieur, 2019

Information about the authors:

Ecaterina Țarna (Chisinau, Moldova) - Doctor of Pedagogics, Associate professor, Chisinau Pedagogical State University «Ion Creanga», Moldova. Academic teaching experience and areas of scientific interest: pedagogy, psychology, communication, conflictology. More than

60 publications national and international. Latest projects: «Consolidation of freedom of opinion in the Republic of Moldova», implemented in the Republic of Moldova with the support of Deutsche Welle Academia and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (2015-2019); Postdoctoral research project " The pedagogical values of developing non support of Deutsche Welle Academia and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany -conflictual attitudes in students from the professional integration perspective ", sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and the National Agency for Research and Development, implemented at the State Pedagogical University «Ion Creangă» (2019-2021).

e-mail: ec.tarna@gmail.com

Tanasescu Cristina Florentina (Buzau, Romania) – «Nicolae Iorga» Theoretical High School Nehoiu, Buzau, Romania. PhD candidate, Doctor, Buzau, Romania at School «Educational Sciences», State Pedagogical University «Ion Creanga» from Chisinau. Research topic: «Efficiency of communicative and organizational skills from the perspective of socio-cultural integration» (7 publications).

e-mail: voicu_cristina_florentina@yahoo.com

Acknowledgments: special gratitude to Callo Tatiana, Dr. Hab., professor, for scientific counselling.

Contribution of the authors. The authors contributed equally to the present research.