

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF SECTORAL SPECIALISTS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AGE OF AI

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The accelerated integration of artificial intelligence into the educational process is significantly transforming approaches to the professional training of specialists in various industry sectors. This is particularly relevant in the context of intercultural communication, which today is an integral component of professional competence for experts in business, IT, medicine, engineering, international relations, education, and the service industry. In a globalized environment, the ability to interact effectively with representatives of different cultures determines not only professional success but also graduates' competitiveness in the international labor market. In this context, artificial intelligence systems, particularly large language models (LLMs), unlock new opportunities for developing multicultural skills but also entail risks.

The fundamental problem with large language models stems from their inherent algorithmic bias. By training on large datasets from the Internet, LLMs can unintentionally distort the objective perception of ethnocultural realities, reproducing or reinforcing stereotypical notions about specific nationalities, languages, traditions, or behavioral patterns.

This undermines the development of empathy, intercultural tolerance, and the capacity for unbiased professional dialogue. As a result, users of systems based on large language models may find themselves within culturally essentialized narratives, perceiving them as neutral or credible [3].

For future sector specialists, this challenge is particularly urgent due to the risk of stereotyping in negotiations and recommendations, oversimplified views of the norms and standards prevailing in other cultures, and unrealistic expectations regarding international teamwork. All these factors create the risk of developing limited communication models that run counter to modern principles of inclusivity and professional ethics.

The unconditional acceptance of such data, as a phenomenon of unquestioning trust in algorithmic decisions, may not be reflective of the user's intellectual capacity. It is often determined by factors such as the speed at which information is obtained, ease of use, and the apparent logical consistency of the system's responses. This is precisely why students may gradually begin to perceive artificial intelligence as a more perfect source of knowledge than human intelligence, disregarding that LLM responses are based on statistical forecasting and probabilistic modeling rather than on an understanding of truth in the human sense [1].

In the process of professional training, the problem arises not when students encounter bias and can identify it, but when such instances go unnoticed and gradually become normalized. That is precisely why the role of the teacher in the age of AI is not diminishing but transforming: the teacher becomes a facilitator of critical thinking, a moderator of reflection, and a mentor in intercultural sensitivity.

The importance of enhancing intercultural competence stems from humans' natural tendency to categorize, stereotype, and oversimplify social reality. Members of every culture develop their own set of behavioral patterns, communication norms, and value systems. Without proper pedagogical guidance, artificial intelligence may fail to overcome these cognitive barriers and, conversely, reinforce them. At the same time, when used methodologically properly, AI becomes a powerful tool for developing cross-cultural abilities.

The solution obviously lies not in abandoning LLMs, but in transforming their limitations into a pedagogical resource. We consider the debriefing method to be one of the most effective approaches in this regard. In contemporary research, debriefing is defined as a reflective technique that facilitates the processing of experience, the development of speech activity, critical thinking, and professional interaction [2; 5; 4]. Accordingly, researchers have highlighted several advantages of debriefing as a cognitive scaffolding method in foreign language education: 1) its applicability to foreign-language and professional communication in real time; 2) assistance in shaping individual learning trajectories; 3) promotion of team interaction; 4) delivery of constructive feedback; 5) establishment of a space for psychological support [5].

In the context of intercultural training for sector specialists, debriefing is particularly useful following AI simulations of professional scenarios: such as international job interviews, negotiations with foreign partners, consultations with clients from other cultures, cross-cultural teamwork, or conflict resolution. After the simulation concludes, the instructor facilitates a discussion in which students analyze what cultural assumptions were embedded in the AI's responses; whether the

scenario contained stereotypes; how appropriate their own reactions were; what alternative communication strategies would have been more effective; and how to adapt their behavior to a real multicultural environment.

In this reflective practice, the pedagogical focus shifts from passive consumption of information to active interpretation, evaluation, and refinement of results generated by artificial intelligence. Students learn not only to use digital tools but also to take responsibility for the quality of their own professional communication, recognize biases, demonstrate empathy, and consciously choose language and behavioral strategies.

As such, the era of artificial intelligence presents both challenges and new opportunities for intercultural communication. Among the challenges are algorithmic bias, the risk of stereotyping, and a decline in critical thinking. Opportunities include personalized learning, modeling of professional situations, the development of adaptive communicative behavior, and access to a global educational environment.

The effectiveness of AI in the foreign language segment of professional training depends primarily on pedagogical support that integrates technological innovations with the humanistic values of education. Further research should focus on developing methodological models for integrating debriefing into foreign language training for specialists in highly specialized fields.

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