

Socio-psychological aspects of adaptation of foreign students

*Raikan Ysmailova*¹, *Roman Kalmatov*^{1,1}, *Lazokatkhan Dzhumaeva*¹

¹Osh State University, International Medical Faculty, Osh, Kyrgyzstan

Abstract. The article deals with the socio-psychological aspects of adaptation of foreign students to the conditions of the educational environment. Adaptation of students to the educational process at a university generally affects the professional training of young specialists. The current and future successes of students and the process of their professional development depend on how long the adaptation process takes place in terms of time and various conditions. In the course of this study, paying attention to the socio-psychological and pedagogical side of adaptation, we supplemented the below-mentioned complex with cultural aspects. Interest in this topic can be traced from the excessive number of literary sources that consider adaptation issues in one aspect or another. We believe, adaptation potential as a set of personal properties is largely related to subjective factors, which to a certain extent characterizes the psychological state of the individual. The conducted studies, regardless of the identified characteristics of adaptation potential, do not provide an accurate explanation of the mechanism of its formation in the process of educational activities.

Key words: foreign students, adaptation, socio-psychological aspects, ethnocultural aspects, cultural diversity, Kyrgyz culture, learning process.

1 Introduction

One of the requirements imposed by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic on modern universities is the presence of international activities, including the presence of exchange programs for training students from foreign partner universities. However, the implementation of exchange programs for foreign students will be ineffective without developed and implemented mechanisms of socio-psychological adaptation. Social and psychological adaptation of foreign students is a necessary link for the successful expansion of areas of cultural interaction. Adaptation processes are significantly influenced by ethnocultural and personal factors. Personal factors are ethnic tolerance and socio-psychological adaptation to a foreign cultural environment. Becoming part of a new educational process, an international student is faced with the need to accept organizational requirements. But this is not only the training regime and the requirements of the university administration that regulate the learning process. We are also talking about the entire set of socio-economic conditions. A foreign student is forced to develop a new line of behavior taking into account the traditions, norms and rules adopted in another country. The system of socio-psychological adaptation is designed to

¹ Corresponding author: rkalmatov@oshsu.kg

solve a whole range of problems. That is why psychological science and practice need a detailed study of these phenomena.

2 Materials: Basic provisions

Adaptation of students to the educational process at a university generally affects the professional training of young specialists. The current and future successes of students and the process of their professional development depend on how long the adaptation process takes place in terms of time and various “costs” [17,18,25,27]. It has been noted that adaptation time and the level of adaptation largely influence the successful mastery of the educational program, psychological comfort, and personal satisfaction with professional choice - the effectiveness of the functioning of the higher education system as a whole [12]. And in the medical biological aspect, based on the peculiarities of the body’s adaptation to new climatic conditions, adaptation to atypical food products affects the health of students, including the risks of developing protein-energy and vitamin-mineral deficiency in the body of students [30].

In the course of this study, paying attention to the psychological and pedagogical side of adaptation, we supplemented the above-mentioned complex with cultural aspects. Interest in this topic can be traced from the excessive number of literary sources that consider adaptation issues in one aspect or another. However, many authors consider only the adaptation of migrant students to the educational process, although in the course of interaction between the student and the educational organization, their mutual adaptation occurs, the basis of which is the gradual entry of students into new professional and socio-economic conditions. A newly enrolled student is included in the system of intra-organizational relations, occupying several positions in it simultaneously. Each position corresponds to a set of requirements, norms, and rules of behavior that determine the social role of a person in a team, as a student, a subordinate, a member of the team of the public organization in which he is studying. A person occupying each of these positions is expected to behave in accordance with it. When entering a study at a particular organization, a person has certain goals, needs, and standards of behavior. In accordance with them, the student makes certain demands on the organization: on the conditions of learning and its motivation.

Somova N.V., based on the competency-based approach in education, proposes to use the term “social-adaptive competence,” by which the author understands “a set of knowledge, ideas, algorithms of action, a system of values and relationships, updated in the process of sociocultural adaptation” [19]. This term, which seems generally acceptable, does not seem to be entirely adequate in relation to the adaptation of a foreigner receiving education in a non-native language, since the content of the term does not include a linguodidactic component. For this reason, in relation to the issues of interest to us, it is more appropriate to talk specifically about the linguo-sociocultural adaptation of foreign students who came to study in Kyrgyzstan in order to obtain higher education. This perspective of consideration is due, first of all, to pragmatic reasons: a foreigner for whom Kyrgyz culture is not a future specialty does not (and should not) set himself the task of complete immersion in Kyrgyz culture and, as a consequence, the development of evaluative values characteristic of bearers of Kyrgyz culture and affective reactions to certain cultural products. In this case, mastering the Kyrgyz language for a foreign student is one of the primary tasks, since the goal of teaching Kyrgyz as a non-native/foreign language is to develop the communicative competence of students [7, 8, 16]. Based on this, ideas about the process and result of adaptation of foreign students to study and life in Kyrgyzstan should be clarified and adjusted.

In our opinion, adaptation potential as a set of personal properties is largely related to subjective factors, which to a certain extent characterizes the psychological state of the individual. The conducted studies, regardless of the identified characteristics of adaptation

potential, do not provide an accurate explanation of the mechanism of its formation in the process of educational activities.

3 Methods and results

To achieve the goals set in the study, methods were used to ensure the objectivity of the survey results:

- monitoring the process of adaptation of foreign students to the Kyrgyz linguocultural and educational environment;
- surveying foreign students who came to study in Kyrgyzstan;
- qualitative and quantitative analysis of the survey results;
- an interpretive method that allows us to identify natural connections between the linguistic picture of the world of a foreign speaker and the sociocultural space in which the study of a foreign language is carried out;
- a method for modeling individual behavior in a foreign cultural environment.

In order to clarify ideas about the peculiarities of adaptation of foreign students to life and study in Kyrgyzstan (International Medical Faculty, Osh State University) and about the factors influencing the course of this process, in April 2024 the authors conducted an anonymous survey of foreign students studying Kyrgyz and Russian languages in Osh State University. 100 respondents (50 young people, 50 girls) aged 18 to 24 years, studying for less than 6 months, took part in the survey. The survey questions, which reflect the problems of linguo-sociocultural adaptation of foreign students, were compiled taking into account the data provided in the studies M.I. Vitkovskaya and I.V. Trotsuk [4] and B.B. Stepanova [20]: the language barrier; difficulties in the learning process; living conditions; unorganized leisure time; insufficient information to students and applicants about the life of the university.

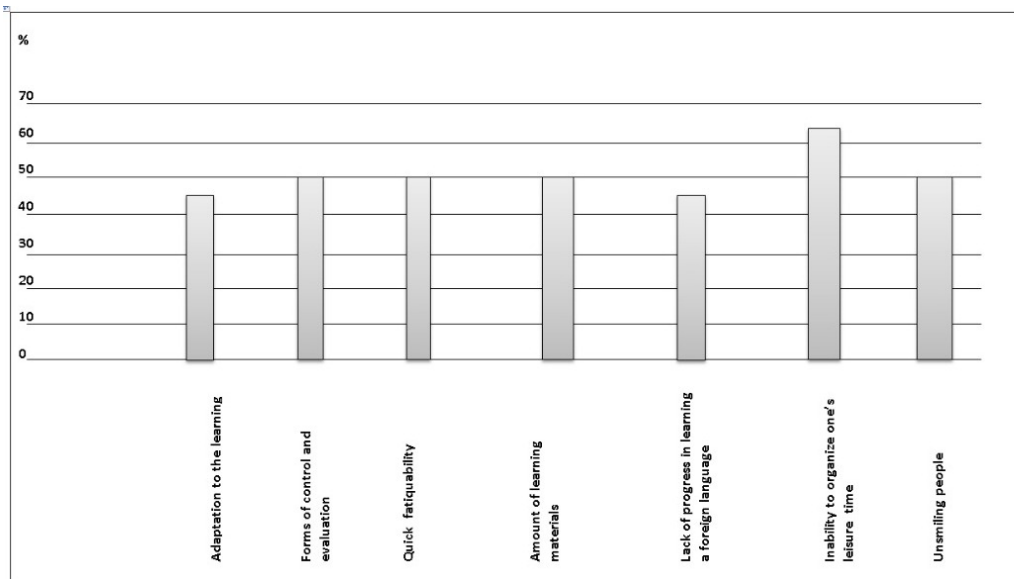


Fig.1. Problem areas of adaptation of foreign students in the Kyrgyz linguo-sociocultural and educational environmen

The results of the survey (Figure 1) showed that, 36% of male students and 16% of female students have difficulty getting used to the cold climate, since the first year students arrive in late autumn. Educational adaptation, as follows from the survey, is complicated by the fact that

54% men and 38% of women do not feel progress in learning a foreign language; 48 and 44%, respectively, do not easily get used to the educational process. With regard to other “problem areas”, the following can be said: in general, educational adaptation is easier for young men. This is eloquently evidenced by the following figures: 40% of student girls and only 12% of student boys are not satisfied with the form of control, and when asked what respondents are not satisfied with in the educational process as a whole, 44% of girls and only 16% of boy students are satisfied with everything. Affective motivation decreases in 20% of men because they do not understand what the teacher is saying (language barrier and foreign language accent). This factor, apparently, does not affect women, since no one answered positively to this question in the questionnaire (0%).

Another important factor is the reason for coming to Kyrgyzstan to get an education. The answer “always dreamed of studying here” was chosen by 44% of men and 68% of women. The way Kyrgyz people communicate with each other seems “very strange” to 44% of male and 16% of female respondents. According to 56% of men and 48% of women, Kyrgyz people smile a little. Only 8% of male students and 28% of female students do not see anything strange in the communicative behavior of Kyrgyz people. The figures suggest that women are more flexible and adaptable to cultural differences, confirming the long-held belief that women generally adapt to change more easily. 30% of respondents do not experience any discomfort.

The survey results indicate that more than 50% of foreign students who came to study in Kyrgyzstan show interest in the peculiarities of life, way of life, and traditions of native speakers of the Kyrgyz language and are psychologically ready to enter the Kyrgyz linguistic, sociocultural and educational environment.

4 Discussion

Linguistic and sociocultural adaptation of a foreign student can be considered as a multi-stage process, including:

1) dosed, directly related to the student’s motivational sphere, obtaining information about the culture of the country of the language being studied (and, above all, about the characteristics of the educational and professional sphere, national educational tradition, model of teacher-student relationships). In this case, there is every reason to talk about educational adaptation as part of linguo-sociocultural adaptation, since it is not so easy for a foreigner to get used to the peculiarities of the Kyrgyz education system (two-semester education, examination sessions, practical training, etc.) and to the specifics of the educational institution (class schedule, curricula, rules for passing modules, tests and exams, etc.).

2) the formation of foreign cultural competence as a fragment of the linguistic picture of the world. According to the fair statement of E.N. Strelchuk, “conceptual, linguistic and scientific pictures of the world, which are in close relationship with each other, contribute to the formation of a positive image of Russia when relying on linguocultural units (non-equivalent vocabulary, phraseological units, proverbs and sayings, aphorisms), the main sources of which are works of foreign art (Kyrgyz in our case) and professionally oriented cultural texts, the presentation of which must be carried out through the prism of a metaphorical model [22];

3) developing the ability to correctly interpret (adequate attribution) manifestations of communicative behavior of Kyrgyz people (primarily when communicating with teachers and fellow students, as well as with the administration of the university and hostel);

4) formation of practical skills and abilities of educational, professional and cultural and everyday communication with native speakers of the Kyrgyz language.

The formation of foreign cultural competence and the formation of an intermediate linguocultural picture of the world is also of great importance because a foreigner, acquiring knowledge about the country of the language being studied, deepens his understanding of his own culture, which means his ability to make adequate intercultural comparisons increases,

which also contributes to the emergence of a tolerant attitude towards values of representatives of another culture. The requirement for organizing the educational process is also important, when the transfer of acquired knowledge to new situations must be ensured [2,3,11,28].

The adaptation period is objectively necessary for every new migrant - and each requires its own time. Having started studying, the student finds himself in an information vacuum, which affects the objective results of his studies and his personal satisfaction. The first weeks of work are always stressful. According to the Holmes-Ray scale of stress factors, changing the place of study and moving to another country is in third place in terms of impact on a person after the death of a close relative or divorce. Consulting psychologists claim that in the case of successful adaptation, the student begins to study effectively within a few months, and in the case of spontaneous development - only after a year.

The specificity of socio-psychological adaptation, in contrast to biological adaptation, lies in the possibility of carrying out not only adaptive, but also transformative activity, i.e. it is an adaptive-adaptive system. If the course is favorable, the process of social and psychological adaptation leads the individual to a state of adaptability [1,21,26]. Adaptability can be defined as the ability of an individual to optimally realize internal capabilities, abilities and personal potential in significant areas. The concept of personal potential seems significant for many researchers of socio-psychological adaptation. Despite the fact that the authors offer different names for this phenomenon: personal potential [9,10,15]; life potential [12,13,14]; adaptive potential [5,6], its essence lies in the fact that this integral education includes a set of qualities and properties, both biological, social and psychological, which are updated when the living conditions of the individual change and allow it to carry out transformative activities.

An analysis of the diversity of researchers' views on the problem of socio-psychological adaptation of the individual allows us to draw the following conclusions:

- firstly, socio-psychological adaptation is characterized by two components: procedural (interaction between the individual and the social environment) and resultant (adaptability), on the basis of which new personal properties and qualities are formed (the transition from a state of adaptation to an adapted personality);
- secondly, the basis of socio-psychological adaptation is the interaction of the individual and the social environment, through the analysis of which one can understand the features of interacting systems;
- thirdly, the personality in the process of socio-psychological adaptation is characterized by activity: it can influence the environment in order to change it;
- fourthly, a person's adaptive abilities largely depend on the totality of psychological characteristics, qualities and personality traits that make up a person's personal potential.

The higher the personal maturity, the higher the likelihood of successful socio-psychological adaptation. However, in addition to the feasible assistance of curators and tutors from senior students of study groups, adaptation centers designed to optimize the interaction between foreign students and the host country should play a role in the socio-psychological adaptation of foreign students in the future.

By analogy with adaptation centers for labor migrants [24], adaptation centers for foreign students carry out the following activities:

- support of groups of foreign students (legal, language, psychological, information, etc.) by employees (lawyer, psychologist, curators and tutors) headed by the dean and deputy dean for educational work of the faculty;
- consulting on labor and migration legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- information and translation support for foreign students;
- assistance in resolving conflicts involving foreign students; - organization of educational courses for foreign students (Kyrgyz and Russian languages);
- organization of psychological assistance and trainings for foreign students;
- organization of cultural and leisure activities (excursions, competitions, museums, etc.);

– the most objective and reliable information about the socio-economic, cultural and political processes of the region in which the host university is located.

5 Conclusion

Based on the data obtained, it is possible to develop a set of measures to relieve emotional stress among foreigners caused by exposure to an unfamiliar culture and prevent communication failures. We assume that for the successful adaptation of foreign students to the Kyrgyz linguistic and cultural environment it is necessary: 1) the creation of an educational environment in which students will feel psychological well-being and harmony with their immediate environment; 2) creating an atmosphere of a “good home” in Kyrgyz and Russian language classes, where everyone should feel comfortable; 3) optimal coordination of the goals and values of the individual and the group; 4) the use of such methods of “cultural learning” as orientation (familiarity with the values, norms and rules of the culture of the country of residence, description of the speech and behavioral characteristics of carriers of a foreign culture), modeling (gaining knowledge about the culture and country on the basis of educational recreation of situations, the development of which occurs according to -differently in two cultures and ensuring the transfer of acquired knowledge to new situations, training method (development and use of special programs, the purpose of which is the formation of a positive attitude towards culture and the accumulation of new communicative experience) [17,26,29]; 5) constant increase in the level of positive affective motivation among foreign students to learn a non-native language; 6) the use of educational and speech situations that are as close as possible to the conditions of real communication in a new language environment for students; 7) strict selection of regional studies topics for teaching communication in a different linguistic and cultural environment.

Thus, having analyzed all aspects of the adaptive process of students to the conditions of the university, taking into account the characteristics of students’ activities while studying at the university, we can highlight, in our opinion, two main aspects of adaptation that form and contribute to the success of the overall process of adaptation of students to the conditions of the university as a whole: Pedagogical , who is responsible for adapting to the structure of activity and education of a higher educational institution, while going through the learning process, acquiring knowledge, skills and abilities; conviction in the correct choice and adequacy of the chosen profession. The criteria for the success of the adaptation process are a stable interest in the subjects of professional disciplines, as well as readiness to work in the profession; the socio-psychological aspect, which is expressed in the formation of personal relationships of the adapter in the process of interaction with the student environment. This includes adaptation to socio-psychological conditions, student group norms, and new social traditions. Its success is determined by its readiness to take part in the public life of the university, non-conflict, adaptable behavior, and the level of emotional well-being of first-year students.

References

1. Azbergenova G. A. Social and psychological adaptation of personality in cross-cultural conditions / G. A. Azbergenova // Bulletin of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. 2016. - T.16. - No. 4. - P. 65–67.
2. Vasilik M.A. Theory and practice of communication. M.: Gardariki, 2003. 615 p.
3. Vitkovskaya M.I., Trotsuk I.V. Adaptation of foreign students to living and studying conditions in Russia (using the example of RUDN University) // Bulletin of the Russian Peoples' Friendship University. Series: Sociology. 2004. No. 6-7. pp. 267-283.

4. Zharenkova A. A. Features of psychological and pedagogical support for first-year students in the process of adaptation to university conditions: abstract of thesis. dis. ...cand. Psychological Sci. M., 2005.
5. Elizarova G.V. Cultural linguistics (experience of studying concepts for methodological purposes). St. Petersburg: Belvedere Publishing House, 2000. 140 p.
6. Zalevskaya A.A. Introduction to psycholinguistics. M.: Russian State University for the Humanities, 1999. 382 p.
7. Isaeva M. A. Some features of teaching the Kyrgyz language in a foreign language audience / M. A. Isaeva // June morphological readings: Collection of scientific papers of the All-Russian scientific-practical conference with international participation. Voronezh: Publishing and Printing Center "Scientific Book", 2021. pp. 130-135.
8. Ilchenko, A. M. Social and psychological adaptation of foreign students: process, ability, result / A. M. Ilchenko. — Text: direct // Young scientist. - 2017. - No. 5 (139). — P. 394-396. — URL: <https://moluch.ru/archive/139/39163/> (access date: 06/04/2024).
9. Karpov V. Yu. The influence of students' physical culture and sports experience on their adaptation to studying at a university // Physical culture: education, education, training. 2005. No. 1. P. 43-46.
10. Karlinsky A.E. Fundamentals of the theory of language interaction. Alma-Ata: Gylm, 1990. 180 p.
11. Kravtsov A.V. Socio-psychological adaptation of foreign students to higher education in Russia: abstract of thesis. diss. ...cand. psychol. Sci. M., 2008. 16 p.
12. Lakhtin A. Yu. Adaptation of first-year students to studying at a university using physical education: abstract. dis. ...cand. ped. Sci. Barnaul, 2011.
13. Lebedeva N.M. Introduction to ethnic and cross-cultural psychology. M.: Klyuch-S, 1999. 224 p.
14. Leontovich O.A. Russians and Americans: paradoxes of intercultural communication: monograph. M.: Gnosis, 2005. 352 p.
15. Maklakov A. G. Personal adaptation potential: its mobilization and forecasting in extreme conditions // Psychological Journal. 2001. T. 22. No. 1. P. 16-24
16. Mamatova A.B., Kenzhebayova A.B., Nasim Mukhamed, Development of speech activity when teaching Kyrgyz language as a foreign language, Current issues of modern science and innovation / Collection of scientific articles based on the materials of the III International Scientific and Practical Conference (December 5, 2023, Ufa). In 2 hours. Part 2 / – Ufa: Publishing house. Scientific Research Center Bulletin of Science, 2023 (2023)
17. Sadokhin A.P. Introduction to the theory of intercultural communication: textbook allowance. M.: Knorus, 2014. 254 p.
18. Salmanova, D. A. Psychological and pedagogical aspects of student adaptation at university / D. A. Salmanova. — Text: immediate // Aspects and trends of pedagogical science: materials of the II International. scientific conf. (St. Petersburg, July 2017). - St. Petersburg: Svoe publishing house, 2017. - pp. 76-79. — URL: <https://moluch.ru/conf/ped/archive/216/12614/> (access date: 06/04/2024).
19. Somova N.V. Analysis of the features of sociocultural adaptation of foreign students at the stage of pre-university preparation // Theory and practice of social development. 2014. No. 1. P. 235-238.
20. Stepanova B.B. Social adaptation of foreign students in modern Russia // Bulletin of the Buryat State University. 2014. No. 6 (2). pp. 62-64.
21. Sternin I.A. On the concept of communicative behavior // Kommunikativ-funktionale Sprachbetrachtung. Halle, 1989. S. 279-282.

22. Strelchuk E.N. Formation of Russian speech culture of foreign bachelors of non-humanitarian specialties in universities of the Russian Federation: dissertation. ... Dr. ped. Sci. M., 2016. 357 p.
23. Fress P., Piaget J. Motivation // *Experimental psychology*. Vol. V. M.: Progress, 1975. P. 15-110.
24. Yakimova Z., Shkodich I., Ibragimova M. Problems of sociocultural and legal adaptation in the Primorsky Territory of labor migrants - refugees from Ukraine // *Society and Economics*. — 2015. No. 3. — P. 144–155.
25. Berry JW Immigration, acculturation and adaptation // *Applied psychology: An international review*. 1997. Vol. 46(1). P. 5-34.
26. Fumadelles M. Motivation et enseignement des langues // *Les langues vivantes*. 1971. No. 4. R. 81-92. Kin Ch. Tips for International Students' Success and Adjustment // *International Student Experience Journal*. 2014. Vol. 2(1). P. 345-349.
27. Terziev V.K. The dependence social adaptation-socialization // *Breakthrough economic reforms in conditions of risk and uncertainty: collection. Art. Intl. scientific-practical conf. (April 10, 2015, Ufa)*. Ufa: AETERNAP, 2015. pp. 8-12.
28. Triandis HC Culture and social behavior. NY etc.: McGraw-Hill, III, 1994. 216
29. Raikan, Yu., Sonaim, K, Gulsina, Z., Dinara, S., Rita, D., Aisynai, A., Zeynegul, M., Bekzada, A., & Kosmira, D. (2020). Integration of national languages through the global communication system: cultural reflection. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 10, 482–493. doi: 10.4236/ojpp.2020.104034.
30. Dzhumaev R., Musheer Mohd, Dzhumaeva N. (2023). Influence of a Vegetarian Diet on Protein-Energy and Vitamin-Mineral Deficiency in the Body Students From India. *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, 9(6), 166-176. doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/91/22