

# The Understanding of the Meaning of Intercultural Communication by Non-philological and Philological Students of Business English Courses at the University of Presov

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**Abstract.** Intercultural communication has been a widely discussed concept within the study of culture and communication in a social context. In classrooms today, intercultural communication is presented and explained even with greater variety than it is approached in theory and research. The aim of the paper is to analyse and compare the process of definition of intercultural communication in university textbooks with the definitions by philological and non-philological students of Business English courses at the University of Presov, to illustrate the possible problems with understanding the meaning as a result of different purposes and contexts of educational reality. The comparative analysis of definitions of intercultural communication by philological and non-philological students of Business English courses showed that philological students defined the concept in a more complex way, revealing a more developed linguistic competence in accordance with the definitions of intercultural communication in the analysed university textbooks. The analysis of university textbooks' definitions also highlighted that approaches to intercultural communication are connected with disciplinary practices.

**Keywords:** Business English course, definition, intercultural communication, non-philological students, philological students.

## Kaip Prešovo universiteto nefilologinių ir filologinių studijų programų studentai supranta tarpkultūrinės komunikacijos reikšmę verslo anglų kalbos dalykuose

**Santrauka.** Suprasti pagrindinių analizuojamos teorijos sąvokų reikšmę svarbu ne tik dėstant universitete. Tarpkultūrinės komunikacijos sąvoka akademiname diskurse tebėra nevienalytė. Martin ir Nakayama (2022) mini tris pagrindinius požiūrius į tarpkultūrinę komunikaciją: funkcionalistinį, interpretacinį ir kritinį, autoriai siūlo juos

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analizuoti pasitelkiant sudėtingais ir paradoksaliais ryšiais grindžiamą dialektinę prieigą. Funkcionalistiniu arba socialinių mokslų požiūriu tarpkultūrinė komunikacija vertinama kiekybiškai, o kultūrinė elgsena kaip nuspėjama. Remiantis interpretaciniu požiūriu pirmenybė teikiama subjektyviai kultūros sampratai, o žmogaus elgesys laikomas kūrybišku. Pasitelkus kritinį požiūrį daugiausia dėmesio skiriama tekstų analizei ir tam, kaip kultūrą veikia galios santykiai. Slovakijos universitetų vadovėliuose autoriai tarpkultūrinei komunikacijai daugiausia taiko funkcionalistinį požiūrį, tačiau kai kurie aspektai, pavyzdžiui, užsienio kalba kaip tarpkultūrinės komunikacijos dalis, nagrinėjami ir pasitelkiant interpretacinį požiūrį. Su tarpkultūrinės komunikacijos sąvoka verslo anglų kalbos dalykuose susiduria ir Prešovo universiteto filologinių bei nefilologinių studijų programų studentai, ji yra jų tarpkultūrinės kompetencijos ugdymo dalis. Studentų siūlomų tarpkultūrinės komunikacijos apibrėžimų analizė, sintezė ir palyginimas atskleidė, kad filologijos studentai šią sąvoką apibūdina kompleksiščiau, vadovaudamiesi universiteto vadovėliuose pateiktais apibrėžimais. Apibrėžimai taip pat implikuoja tradicinį požiūrį į kultūrą, sąsajas su konkrečiomis šalimis ir tautomis. Atskleista ir tai, kad tarpkultūrinėje komunikacijoje svarbu atsižvelgti į skirtingus mokymo(si) tikslus bei kontekstus, o ateities tyrimams svarbu, kad prasmės supratimo skirtumai susiję su tikslu ir kontekstu bei kultūros samprata.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** tarpkultūrinė komunikacija, universitetų vadovėliai, verslo anglų kalba.

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## Introduction

Two paradoxical aspects have appeared to be prominent when dealing with intercultural communication at present: the difficulty of its theoretical and methodological delimitation on the one hand, and its frequent analysis in various disciplines and contexts on the other. Scientific knowledge should theoretically support empirical research. The theory and the research methods cannot be separated. As Gudykunst (2002, p. 175) writes, ‘the methods that researchers use are based on the meta-theoretical assumptions they make and the theories they use to guide their thinking.’

Though scientific knowledge is not definite and clear-cut, the never-ending discussion of approaches to intercultural communication seems to undermine the research itself. The solution seems to be in the disciplinary and situational contextualization of selected approaches. Similarly to discourse analysis, intercultural communication has to be analysed in the context of its use and purpose as the governing principles.

As Gudykunst (2002, p. 183) claimed, there had been an enormous growth in the number of intercultural communication theories since the 1980s. While he talked about objectivist and subjectivist approaches, today, many authors (Hoff, 2020; Holliday et al., 2010; Orsini-Jones and Lee, 2018) propose the distinction between the traditional and critical interpretations of intercultural communication. Therefore, researchers dealing with intercultural communication have to contextualize their research and explain their position on the scale from traditional to critical approaches. It has to be mentioned that Martin and Nakayama (2022) have proposed a solution to the problem of intercultural communication paradigmatic variety by adopting a dialectical approach covering all approaches.

In classrooms today, intercultural communication is presented and explained even with greater variety than it is approached in theory and research. The aim of the paper is to analyse and compare the definitions of intercultural communication by university teachers dealing with the topic in their courses with the definitions by philological and non-philological students of Business English courses at the University of Presov, to illustrate the possible problems with understanding the meaning as a result of different

purposes and contexts of educational reality. The research involved methods of analytical-synthesizing character.

## **The Variety of Approaches to Intercultural Communication**

The concept of intercultural communication has developed over the years of discussion. Martin et al. (2012, p. 22-23) describe different approaches to the study of intercultural communication between the USA/Japan and Europe. A European study of intercultural communication has been distinct in at least four aspects:

- in the motivation to establish the study: social and political issues related to immigration;
- in focus: particularly the role of language;
- in disciplinary foundations: linguistically oriented;
- in the preferred research paradigms: interpretation and qualitative research.

Martin et al. (2012, p. 24-25) argue that since the end of the twentieth century, American scientists have decided on interpretative research of intercultural communication.

Several authors (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Gudykunst & Mody, 2002; Piller, 2017; Martin & Nakayama, 2022) classified the approaches to intercultural communication by reviewing the methods and theoretical assumptions in the field. Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988, p. 223) write about specific issues of research across cultures. They believe that methods change with cultures and, therefore, researchers cannot rely on one method only. What Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988, p. 223-224) also find important when doing research is 'the level of analysis', whether it is the level of culture, organization, or an individual. It affects data interpretation in terms of correlations and comparisons. There also seems to be a problem with the focus on either the individual or the collective. The view of an individual as being influenced by every cultural group or life experience leads to the impossibility of any definition of intercultural communication, as there are too many possible combinations. The view of an individual as being governed by a dominant, usually national culture leads to an oversimplified approach to intercultural communication.

Piller (2017, p. 4-5) writes about the importance of clarification on whether the presented research of intercultural communication is contrastive, interactive, or discursive when she uses these terms to describe cross-cultural, intercultural and inter-discourse communication, respectively. While cross-cultural communication research compares different communicative practices of different cultural groups, intercultural communication research studies such practices in interaction. Inter-discourse research denies any prior cultural identity and analyses text and talk to find out how cultural identity is created. Noels et al. (2011, p. 61) argue that when discussing how reality is perceived and understood, it is important to talk about a suitable methodology. Despite a recent increase in qualitative research, intercultural communication research has traditionally relied on quantitative data acquired by survey methods such as questionnaires and self-reports of interculturally conditioned behaviour.

Recently, Martin and Nakayama (2022) proposed a dialectical approach that combines three traditional paradigms of intercultural communication identified as social science, interpretive, and critical. They explain the differences among these three approaches as follows (Martin – Nakayama, 2022, p. 47): the social scientific (or functional) research approach describes and predicts behaviour and emphasizes statistical measures while using methods of surveys and observations. In this approach, communication is influenced by culture. This approach is founded on Psychology. The interpretive research also describes behaviour but stresses language usage as crucial for a description of human behaviour. It uses methods of field studies and participant observation and is founded on Anthropology and Sociolinguistics. The critical approach to intercultural communication stresses the power behind intercultural interactions, while culture represents power relations. Discourse analysis is used in the critical approach to uncover power relations. It is founded on various disciplines. The research goals of these three approaches to intercultural communication are (Martin & Nakayama, 2022, p. 47):

- social scientific: ‘describe and predict behaviour’;
- interpretive: ‘describe behaviour’;
- critical: ‘change behaviour’.

Martin and Nakayama (2022, p. 66–71) propose to cover these three approaches with a single dialectical approach explained as based on the complex and paradoxical relations of dialectics, such as cultural – individual, personal – contextual, differences – similarities, static – dynamic, and others. Piller (2017) calls for a more realistic approach to intercultural communication that would reflect real-life experiences. She believes that intercultural communication is studied in multiple disciplines, which does not imply interdisciplinarity.

When referring to intercultural communication, it is important to point out that there are different perceptions of culture that influence the theoretical grasp of intercultural communication. Roberts and Sarangi (1993, p. 97-102) state that many linguists studying intercultural communication regard culture in the functionalist tradition of a preference for certain communicative behaviour patterns with a higher level of abstraction. It can also give a negative connotation to culture as the source of misunderstandings between individuals from different cultures. Holliday et al. (2010, p. 2-5) identify two views of culture: essentialist and non-essentialist. They can be understood as traditional and critical approaches to culture, respectively. Holliday et al. (2010, p. 3-4) describe the difference in various aspects:

- nature: culture as a physical entity vs. a social force;
- place: culture as associated with a country and language vs. associated with a value;
- relation: world consisting of separated national cultures vs. blurred national boundaries/frontiers;
- membership: exclusive (one national culture and language) vs. complex of cultures;
- behaviour: unified cultural behaviour vs. behaviour influenced by a complex of cultural forms;

- communication: cultural stereotypes and details as important to communication vs. complexity of an individual as important.

The view of culture seems to be crucial to the understanding of intercultural communication, which can be proved by the existing research (Holliday et al., 2010; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Piller, 2017; Martin & Nakayama, 2022; Roberts & Sarangi, 1993). Hall (1981) points out that learning language and cultural institutions and traditions is only a first step, and equally important is training in the nonverbal communication of the country. It is what he calls ‘the silent language’.

The identification of a language with a country where it is dominant is an essentialist or traditional view of culture and was used in foreign language teaching via the teaching of information about the country in its cognitive meaning (as different to communicative or intercultural) also in Slovakia until recently (Zelenkova, 2010). Nevertheless, Fayzul-laevna (2023, p. 424-425) claims that teaching the cultural specifics of different countries is an important part of the foreign language instruction for non-philological students. In this context, Javorcikova and Zelenkova (2019, p. 19) talk about teaching realia”, a term also used in Slovakia that denotes the content of Cultural Studies used in the Western world since the 1960s. These authors also stress that non-philological students have to be taught to present their ideas with cultural sensitivity (Javorciková & Zelenkova, 2019, p. 39). Javorcikova and Zelenkova (2010) see the main difference between philological and non-philological students’ goals as primarily linguistic and cultural, as opposed to effective functioning in the business sphere, which also influences teaching methods. Lungu (2013, p. 475) also observes the different needs of non-philological students who, despite learning English for four to eight years during their previous education, had ‘considerable language problems during their first year’ in mechanical engineering long-life learning education. Lungu (2013, p. 458-459) stresses the importance of needs analysis and innovative teaching methods and materials, as the motivation and purpose of learning English are different for these students. The discourse created by the teachers presenting the specific topic, the way they tell their students the story of intercultural communication in classrooms and in textbooks can significantly influence their understanding of the meaning of the concept of intercultural communication.

## **The Definition of Intercultural Communication**

In the context of foreign language education and intercultural communication, the analysis of discourse dealing with specific concepts offers various ways of revealing possible connections between the potential and actual realisation of a text in a foreign language with regard to cultural specifics and is an instrument for revealing hidden meanings and preferred forms of language expression in a given culture. Similarly to culture, discourse is also a much-discussed concept. Generally speaking, discourse is any use of language in a social setting. Discourse is influenced and shaped by language, the world, participants, the media, the purpose, and previous discourses and vice versa (Johnstone 2002, p. 2-9). Discourse, in this sense, is not an isolated abstract system but an example of real-life communication influenced by and influencing the context in which it takes place.

Phipps and Guilherme (2004) point out that languages and intercultural communication are not culturally neutral, and it is not possible to attribute lingua franca practices to specific cultures (ours or theirs). Hall (1981, p. 186) considers culture and communication as mutually connected, influencing, and being influenced by each other. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (2007, p. 13) claim that linguistic differences in interpretation in everyday life are not only a matter of grammar and semantics but also depend on the context of the social situation. It is the knowledge of conventions related to the context of a given situation that can be gained only through an interactive experience in a cultural environment.

In the context of the study, the focus is on the process of defining intercultural communication and possible interpretative choices. The discourse is treated as a subjective representation of the concept of intercultural communication, which can differ in its linguistic construction, by professionals (teachers), non-philological, and philological students. The interdiscursive definitions of intercultural communication will be analysed to find out the possible theoretical foundations of intercultural communication as a theoretical construct used in classroom discourse. Consequently, the understanding of the meaning of intercultural communication via definitions of intercultural communication by philological and non-philological students will be compared with the understanding of intercultural communication as presented in academic discourse. A possible gap in understanding can reveal discrepancies caused by disciplinary and discursive practices in the academic community.

## **Understanding the Meaning of Intercultural Communication in Slovak University Textbooks**

For the purpose of the study, four university textbooks (Jelenova, 2014; Slivkova, 2015; Ali Taha, 2015; Pondelikova, 2020) were selected as being used by university teachers of intercultural communication courses at the University of Presov. The selection was done by searching the category of university textbooks in the registration databases CREPC 1 and 2 (CVTI SR, 2012a)<sup>1</sup>. These textbooks are written in the Slovak language, but in all of them, the role of a foreign language is considered an important part of intercultural competence, and the concept of intercultural communication is defined from several points of view. These textbooks were used in the courses attended by respondents of the study. The focus of the qualitative analysis of understanding the meaning of intercultural communication in university textbooks was on the process of defining intercultural communication in terms of theoretical frameworks. The rationale behind the analysis was the agreement with the claim of Baxter (2010, p. 124-125) that there was an underlying order, logic, and meaningfulness in the use of language while the variability of discourse

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<sup>1</sup> University textbooks written by university full-time teachers are registered at these databases, as their number at a particular university is one of the sources of financing by the state (MSVVS SR, 2023) and a sign of quality as it would not be registered in the category of the university textbook without fulfilling the necessary conditions (CVTI SR, 2012b).

was being caused by the context and participants' discourse. Baxter (2010) also considers any discourse to be a linguistic construction of reality, not its objective representation. It means that reality is conceptualised by the specific use of language.

The definitions of intercultural communication in the discourse of university textbooks revealed similarities in the cognitive aspect. The selected textbooks start with the introduction of the important concepts of intercultural communication: culture and communication. Analyses of culture and communication lead to definitions of intercultural communication. By mutual comparison, the shared areas of the intercultural communication meaning were identified: misunderstandings, stereotypes, prejudices, and otherness, all of them caused by cultural differences. Within the analyses of communication, the focus was on the distinction between verbal and non-verbal communication, and attention was also directed towards foreign languages either as components of intercultural communication or in the contexts of tourism and translation. The aspect of foreign languages showed disciplinary differences based on the supposed reader of the text and the disciplinary background.

Jelenova (2014, p. 14-15) writes that Edward Hall was the first to come up with the term 'intercultural communication' in 1959 and defines it herself as the concept denoting interaction between a sender and a recipient (or more) of a message coming from different cultures or subcultures. She stresses the fact that cultures have to be so different that it influences communication. Communicators can also be members of subcultures. This approach is dominantly functionalist.

In comparison, Slivkova (2015, p. 55) defines intercultural communication as the communication of two or more cultures, the basis of which is the mastery of a foreign language and the knowledge of cultural specificities of various kinds and, subsequently, the selection of appropriate behavioural strategies. She considers the role of a foreign language in intercultural communication in the sociolinguistic meaning as the ability to use it in a socially appropriate way as it is used in a given culture (Slivková, 2015, p. 70). Such an approach to intercultural communication can be viewed as dominantly interpretive.

Pondelikova (2020, p. 56) defines intercultural communication in the context of globalization and multiculturalism, which, according to her, 'combines three phenomena' ... 'culture, language, and the way of communication'. She also adds that intercultural communication is when members of different cultural opinions, values, and ways of behaviour communicate with each other (Pondelikova, 2022, p. 32). This approach can be considered dominantly interpretive.

Similar to the above-mentioned authors, Ali Taha (2015, p. 8-9) offers several definitions of intercultural communication, which have the process of information exchange between different cultures in a certain social context in common. However, her approach is dominantly functionalist. However, similarly to Pondelikova and Slivkova, Ali Taha (2015, p. 58) believes that language, thought, and culture are closely linked. Furthermore, English is considered the dominant language of communication (Ali Taha, 2015, p. 60).

In summary, within the academic discourse of intercultural communication in textbooks used at the courses at the University of Presov, the approach to intercultural communication is dominantly functionalist or interpretive (in Martin and Nakayama's terms), especially in connection with foreign languages and the context of communication. It is also caused by disciplinary practices as Jelenova and Ali Taha are social scientists (Psychology and Management, respectively), while Pondelikova and Slivkova are both linguists.

## **Comparative Analysis of Students' Definitions of Intercultural Communication: Methods and Results**

Business English is taught with the purpose of effective communication within the international business sphere. It also encompasses intercultural communication, which is understood here as an effective communication of culturally different people. As the concept of intercultural communication is studied from different perspectives within academic discourse, the comparison of its understanding by the philological and non-philological students of Business English courses at the University of Presov can reveal the possible problem areas to be addressed.

The courses of Business English for philological and non-philological students differ in cognitive and metacognitive aspects. Philological students have the advantage of more elaborated strategies of knowledge application in English, while non-philological students are expected to rely on the knowledge content. Therefore, the reality of teaching can also differ. The respective courses were aimed at the development of Business English skills, although the purpose was different. Philological students of English language and Anglophone cultures were better equipped linguistically, but non-philological students understood the content of learning better. The teaching also involved methods to develop and improve intercultural communicative competence<sup>2</sup>.

Definitions of intercultural communication by philological and non-philological students were obtained by a questionnaire method and were semantically analysed by the teacher of the courses who had had several years of experience with teaching intercultural communication to non-philological students and then compared to synthesise the groups of meanings. These groups of meanings were expressed in % share to be able to compare the groups of meanings of non-philological students with the groups of meanings by philological students as there was a lower number of philological students taking part in the survey. It was objectively caused by a significantly lower number of students majoring in English language and Anglophone cultures compared to the number of management students. A possible gap in understanding can reveal important information about the importance of contextualization and the purpose of the use of the concept of intercultural communication.

The Faculty of Management and Business offers its students at the first-year master's level the *Applied Foreign Language for Managers 2 (English)* course. The course is

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<sup>2</sup> Discussions, role-plays, and critical incidents.



taught in a summer term and lasts 45 minutes. The questionnaire survey among management students was conducted during the summer semester of the 2019/2020 academic year. The questionnaire was distributed in paper form in the period from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2020. The students were asked to answer whether they subjectively believed they could define the concept of intercultural communication. It was optional to write down their answer, as it was important for students to respond only if they felt they understood the concept. The question ‘Do you think you can define intercultural communication in your own words? If so, write it down.’ was formulated based on several years of experience in teaching the subject to students taking into account their needs, deficiencies, and necessities. It was important to ensure that the question was simple and general, and that a student would answer it without hesitation. Students were explained the concept of intercultural communication in the previous semester during the course *Intercultural Management and Corporate Culture*, therefore their knowledge was assumed (Dancisinova, 2019, p. 20).

In the 2019/2020 academic year, 153 students enrolled in the course, of which 106 (69.28%) participated in a questionnaire survey. Among these, 76.4% of students claimed to be able to define intercultural communication, and 67% wrote it down. By the analysis of these definitions, it is possible to divide them into four meaning groups:

1. communication between **persons** from different cultures (38%), for example<sup>3</sup>:
  - *Communication with people from different cultures who have distinct habits, manners, customs, and traditions.*
  - *Communication with a person who comes from a culture different from mine.*
2. communication between different **cultures** (29.5%), for example:
  - *Communication between two different cultures, e. g. companies from different countries which communicate together.*
  - *Communication between cultures differs not only in language but also in other factors.*
3. communication between different **countries/nations** (19,7%), for example:
  - *It is communication between two or more countries that are different.*
  - *Communication among different countries, and nationalities.*
4. communication in a **foreign language** (12,8%), for example:
  - *Communication between members of different cultures in a foreign language (especially in English)<sup>4</sup>.*
  - *Takes place between two or more persons verbally and non-verbally in different languages so that they understand each other.*

The analysis shows that all students define intercultural communication as the process of communication. The difference is in the subject or means of communication. While in the first three meanings, the focus is on the communicators: people, cultures, and nations, whereas in the last case, it is on the means of communication – a foreign language. In

<sup>3</sup> The examples are actual wordings of respondents as they wrote it down.

<sup>4</sup> Though this definition could be grouped also in the second group, there was extra information about the foreign language which was missing in the second group. The focus then was on the means of communication.

the context of selected university textbooks' definitions of intercultural communication, all definitions are incomplete, yet not incorrect. The third definition also suggests a traditional understanding of culture and a functionalist approach to intercultural communication. What these definitions lack is the aspect of the effectiveness of communication.

The philological students' sample was selected from among English study programmes at the Faculty of Arts. The students of the English language and Anglophone cultures studying the programme at the second year master's level can enroll in the course of *Chapters in Business English*. The course is taught during a winter term and lasts 90 minutes. These students were introduced to the concept of culture in various contexts within several courses, such as in the course *Cultural Studies in Anglophone Countries* by completing of which, the student should be able to describe and illustrate key concepts in cultural studies as stated in the course description (Presovska univerzita v Presove, 2023).

The questionnaire survey among these students was conducted in the winter semester of the 2022/2023 academic year when all 19 students of the study programme enrolled in the course. The questionnaire was distributed in paper form during the last session in December 2022 and 15 students participated (79%). Students were asked the same question as non-philological students, and it was optional to write it down because it was important that the students would respond voluntarily and confidently. Only one student did not write the definition.

The definitions of philological students were more complex and can be divided into four meaning groups:

1. Communication between **members** of different countries or cultures (43%), for example:
  - *Communication between people of different cultures, countries, ethnicities...;*
  - *Communication between people of different cultures, containing culturally specific elements.*
2. **Relationship and understanding** between members of different cultures or countries (35.7%), for example:
  - *For me, it is the connection or relationship among everyone on a higher level. To understand things beyond cultures.*
  - *It is important to recognize different cultures and to be able to communicate with them properly and to have our horizons broadened by these interactions. It is good to understand how other cultures live and how we are influenced by them and vice versa.*
3. **Language use** perspective (14.3%), for example:
  - *Comprises the use of language between different countries via lingua franca language known as English.*
  - *Shows us how every culture influences communication. How it changes.*
4. **Intra-cultural** perspective (10%), for example:
  - *Communication within a culture, among people who share common characteristics.*

As with the non-philological students, most of the philological students (43%) understood intercultural communication as communication between either members of cultures or countries. Compared to the definitions of non-philological students, the definitions of philological students were more complex and varied, which can be explained by their better command of English. The first meaning corresponds to the first three meanings of non-philological students. The third meaning can be paired with the fourth meaning of non-philological students. The second meaning of philological definitions represents the interpretive approach to intercultural communication, and the fourth one can be considered incorrect as such communication is the subject of cross-cultural communication studies. In comparison with university textbooks' analysis, the philological students define intercultural communication correctly although their definitions are less detailed.

## Results and Discussion

Different understandings of the concept of intercultural communication occur in theory as well as in classrooms. The analysis of definitions of intercultural communication among philological and non-philological students of Business English courses can characterize and illustrate the differences caused by different purposes as well as different contexts of educational reality. While students of philological courses are better equipped in terms of linguistic skills, non-philological students can draw upon their content knowledge of the business sphere.

Non-philological students of Management defined intercultural communication most frequently as the communication between persons from different cultures, countries, or nations (38%). Philological students of the English language and cultures also preferred the definition of communication between members of different cultures (43%). Similar definitions are also found in academic discourse of Slovak textbooks dealing with intercultural communication (Prucha, 2010; Jelenova, 2014; Slivkova, 2015; Ali Taha, 2015; Pondelikova, 2020), though these definitions are usually more elaborated and involve more aspects when they do not focus on a traditional understanding of culture. The approach may be functionalist, as with the students, but their understanding of culture is not the same. Therefore, the focus in teaching intercultural communication should also be on the understanding of the concept of culture in a non-essentialist or critical sense.

The main difference in definitions of intercultural communication among non-philological and philological students is in adding the aspect of relationship and understanding between different cultures by more than one-third of philological students (35.7%). It is more under the prevailing academic discourse definitions in university textbooks. It suggests that the students of the English language and culture understand the meaning of culture in a more complex way than non-philological students of Management. It shows the importance of intercultural communicative competence.

## Conclusion

In the analysed discourse dealing with intercultural communication in academic discourse at the Faculty of Management and Business and the Faculty of Arts of the University of Presov, the understanding of the meaning of intercultural communication is functionalist and interpretive. It means that intercultural communication is viewed as happening in a social context, often in foreign languages, and the relationship between communication and culture is seen as being mutually influenced. Moreover, culture is understood by non-philological students more in its traditional meaning as being connected with a certain nation or country.

The aim of the paper was to describe and analyse the understanding of the meaning of intercultural communication by philological and non-philological students of Business English courses at the University of Presov in the context of university textbooks' discourse to illustrate the reality of teaching with different purposes and in different educational contexts. The main difference in understanding the meaning between non-philological and philological students showed itself in the complexity of definitions. While non-philological students focused on the concept of communication, philological students also added the relationship dimension. The university textbooks presented more elaborate definitions.

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