

Intercultural Education and Intercultural Competence in Higher Education in Ukraine

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Abstract: The establishment of independent Ukraine in 1991 created a political and social climate that entailed a need and possibility for democratic educational reforms in Ukraine. An integration of Ukraine in multicultural European and global society can be supported academically by infusing intercultural education in primary, secondary, and higher education curricula.

This literature review introduces the importance of implementing intercultural education and intercultural competence in higher education in Ukraine. It will examine sociopolitical and socio-historic foundations of intercultural education in Ukraine and connect them to current trends in intercultural education and power issues in intercultural education policy-making in the country. The main argument of the paper is that effective intercultural education policies and curricula that foster intercultural competence are an important link to promote Ukraine's integration in the diverse European society.

It is important to define terms *multicultural* and *intercultural* to pinpoint differences between them. Following Gundara (2010), the term *multicultural* is used as a descriptive term that "indicates elements of diversities in schools and communities" (p. 299) due to current racialized usage of the term to describe new immigrant populations visibly different from dominant White populations. The term *intercultural* will be used to address "broader taxonomic features of difference and diversity . . . through intercultural policies and practices" (p. 299). For this paper, the term *intercultural* is used to address education policies and practices.

To conduct this literature review, the author used the following search terms to retrieve the appropriate articles and book chapters from ERIC search engine—*intercultural education, Ukraine, higher education, intercultural competence, multicultural education, intercultural relations, and intercultural policies*. Second, the author skimmed through the abstracts of the retrieved articles and looked through the tables of content of the books available in FIU library and those ordered through an interlibrary loan. Last, the author used only those articles and books that directly dealt with issues of intercultural education in Ukraine.

Intercultural Context

Diversity and the "East-West" division of Ukraine as well as the representation of languages in education, intercultural tolerance and xenophobia, and internationalization of higher education in Ukraine is discussed in this section.

Diversity and the "East-West" Division of Ukraine

Ukraine is a multicultural and multiethnic country that is inhabited by more than 110 ethnic groups and national minorities. According to the latest 2001 census (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2001), the population of the country consists of Ukrainians (77.8%), Russians (17.3%), Belarusians (0.6%), Moldovans (0.5%), Crimean Tatars (0.5%), Bulgarians (0.4%), Hungarians (0.3%), Romanians (0.3%), Poles (0.3%), Jews (0.2%), and other groups (1.8%). However, the full diversity of the country is not reflected in the census because it does not distinguish between ethnic subgroups of native Ukrainians that have their own distinctive

culture, dialects and live in specific geographic regions of the country (e.g., hutsuls, boikians, lemkians, slobozhany, poltavtsi).

The relations between diverse cultural groups in Ukraine have been polarized into pro-European west and pro-Russian east and are characterized by political, ideological, religious, and linguistic tensions. This conditional division is an aftermath of the occupation of different regions of Ukraine by different countries. Historically, different parts of Ukraine had been under the influence of diverse cultures until the country joined the USSR (Riabchuk, 2009). Before the Soviet Union, Western *oblasts* (regions) of Ukraine have been under the Polish, Austro-Hungarian, Romanian, and Czechoslovakian rule, while eastern and southern oblasts have been under the influence of Russia (Riabchuk, 2009; Shulman, 1999). As a result, in southeastern oblasts of Ukraine, “multiethnicity has not translated into multiculturalism . . . but instead has provided a nutrient substance for the Soviet-style melting pot” (Riabchuk, 2009, p. 21).

The theoretical underpinnings of the “east-west” cleavage in Ukraine are reflected in Elster, Offer, and Preuss (1998) who determined two kinds of cleavages innate to postcommunist transitions:

- (1) those of a political-ideological kind that divide the population into those who have been loyal or acquiescent under the old regime, including its elites and activists and those who identify themselves as its . . . opponents or victims, and (2) those cleavages of an identity-based kind that divide the population into members of the titular nation and religious, linguistic, and ethnic majorities of various kinds. (p. 249)

This conditional division of the country along *fault lines* (Huntington, 1996) is interconnected with the voting pattern and religious affiliation—Ukrainian Orthodoxy of the Kyiv Patriarchate and Greek-Catholicism of the west and Ukrainian Orthodoxy of Moscow Patriarchate of the east part. As Pachlovska (2009) pointed out, the current pro-Russian President of Ukraine, Yanukovich, did not separate the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP) from his election campaign. Moreover, the UOC MP “declared itself against all religions in Ukraine that supported the political opposition: Ukrainian Orthodox (Kyiv Patriarchate) and Jews, Catholics and Moslems, Protestant and Buddhists” (p. 42). Further, Ukraine is divided into multireligious and multicultural European part and monoreligious and monocultural Soviet part.

The Representation of Languages in Education

Linguistic diversity of Ukraine is not independent of the bipolar division of the country. The predominantly Russian-speaking east and Ukrainian-speaking west add to the complexity and tensions of the titular country. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Ukrainian language was declared the only state language of the independent Ukraine, “disrupting the previously established hierarchy in which Russian was the language of power and Ukrainian had low status (Bilaniuk, 2009, p. 336). According to the data in the Country Report (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine [MESU], 2010), the Ukrainian language is the mother tongue of 64.3% of the population, and the Russian-speaking population totals 36.4% of the country. Other languages are numerous but are spoken by a small number of other cultural groups (1.5%), such as Moldavian, Hungarian, Gagausian, Armenian, Azerbaijanian and others. Currently, the Ukrainian language, after being “marginalized and denigrated relative to Russian, has become increasingly used in public urban contexts and by political and cultural leaders” (p. 337). However, it “has not lost all of its connotations of low prestige and backwardness, and in many contexts Russian retains the prestige and power that it had in the Soviet Union” (p. 337). Only 41.8% of Ukrainian population prefer to speak Ukrainian, while 36.4% consider Russian as their language of communication and 21.6% self-identify as bilingual (MESU, 2010).

The relationship of language diversity to other forms of cultural diversity was identified by Romaine (2011) who argued that languages are “a benchmark for cultural diversity because virtually every major aspect of human culture ranging from kinship classification to religion is dependent on language for its transmission” (p. 377). Therefore, the discussion of Ukrainian language and languages of minorities in Ukrainian education follows next.

How is the language diversity represented and accommodated in Ukrainian schools and higher education institutions? According to the Country Report prepared by the MESU (2010), based on the results of the All-Ukrainian poll of the Sociology Institute, most students study in Ukrainian (80.4%), while schooling is available in languages of minorities as well.

The same study reports that there is a trend toward an increase in the representation of the languages of minorities in Ukrainian education from 0.45% in 2001 to 1.13% in 2007/2008 (MESU, 2010). However, students’ proficiency in Ukrainian is required to continue their education. Since 2010, education testing has been conducted in Ukrainian only, while before the language provisions for the minority groups were offered (MESU, 2010). It should be noted, however, that the number of secondary students learning Russian as a subject (1,292,518) sufficiently exceeds the number of students that learn Ukrainian as a subject (829,610), while the number of students using Russian as the language of instruction (779,423) is smaller than those using Ukrainian (3,608,725).

The representation of the languages of minorities in higher education as languages of instruction is not as diverse as it is in secondary education—ten languages in higher education institutions in comparison to 19 in secondary schools (MESU, 2010). However, the use of minorities’ languages in higher education should not be confused with the use of foreign languages as languages of instruction for majors in foreign languages.

Intercultural Tolerance and Xenophobia in Ukraine

Overall, the population of Ukraine does not express high level of tolerance towards the representatives of other cultural and racial groups. Data from a Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS, 2010) survey revealed that in 2010 Ukrainians express the highest level of tolerance—do not mind if the following ethnic groups live in Ukraine—towards Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians (96%), Russian-speaking Ukrainians (94%), Russians (85%), Byelorussians (76%), and Jews (63%). Less than half of Ukrainians agree that the following groups should live on the territory of Ukraine: Black population (22%), Germans (38%), Roma (37%), Canadians (36%), Americans (35%), and French (33%; KIIS, 2010). In addition, results of the KIIS (2010) survey indicated that the level of xenophobia of Ukrainians is somewhat high, as measured on a scale of social distance (Bogardus, 1933). The scale ranged from 1 (would agree if the representatives of this group become members of their family) to 7 (would not let the representatives of this group enter Ukraine). From the results of the KIIS survey, we can infer that Ukrainian population is still not prepared for smooth integration to a multicultural European society. Therefore, it is important to introduce and support intercultural education in Ukraine.

Internationalization of Higher Education in Ukraine

The top three priorities of education policy in Ukraine, as officially reported to UNESCO European Center for Higher Education by Kremen and Nikolajenko (2006), are “the further development of the national education system, its adjustment to a new economy, and its integration into the European and global community” (p. 11). As a result, internationalization of higher education is viewed positively by Ukrainian policy-makers and encouraged to fully integrate Ukrainian higher education into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), and increase its competitiveness and compatibility with higher

education of other countries, while preserving national achievements and traditions of higher education (Kremen & Nikolajenko, 2006).

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MESU) encourages faculty and student mobility and is supportive of international agreements in higher education. As of 2006, MESU had 82 inter-governmental and 46 inter-departmental agreements with 60 countries (Kremen & Nikolajenko, 2006). The examples of cooperation of higher education institutions of Ukraine and international organizations are the implementation of the European Union's program Tempus and Bologna process in the country. Ukraine became a member of Tempus in 1993. The program supports cooperation and modernization of higher education in the countries of the EU and its partner countries by means of higher education projects (Tempus, 2011). Since, the program has been supporting internationalization of Ukrainian higher education institutions and the establishment of higher education partnerships (e.g., student exchange and joint research projects) with higher education institutions of the EU (Tempus, 2011).

The main objective of the Bologna process is the creation of European Higher Education Area by 2010 that will make European higher education more compatible, comparable, and competitive (European Commission, 2011). Since Ukraine entered the Bologna agreement in 2005, the following subsequent developments occurred in the country, according to the latest National Report (2009):

- by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No.162 of July 13, 2007 there was approved an Action Plan on quality assurance for higher education of Ukraine and its integration into the European and world educational community for the period until 2010;
- a draft of the Law of Ukraine "On amendments to the law of Ukraine "On Higher Education"" has been prepared taking into account Bologna provisions and recommendations;
- there was introduced the system of ranking of higher education institutions (HEIs) of Ukraine (September 2007);
- Ukraine became a governmental member of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) (April 2008);
- Ukrainian Association of Student Self-government (UASS) became a member of the European Student's Union (December 2007);
- by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No.602 of July 03, 2008 there was established a working group on the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for higher education. Consultations to design its profile, level descriptors, credit ranges are being held. (p. 2)

Intercultural Competence

The development of intercultural competence is one the most important outcomes of internationalization of higher education institutions (Deardorff, 2006; Krajewski, 2011). Accelerating globalization creates a demand for interculturally competent workforce (Krajewski, 2011). However, there is no unanimous agreement among scholars about the definition of intercultural competence. The most fruitful attempt to define and assess intercultural competence was accomplished by Delphi study that was based on collaborative efforts of 23 leading intercultural scholars (Deardorff, 2006). The scholars provided definitions and specific components of intercultural competence organized in Table 1.

Deardorff (2006) organized the results of the study in the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Figure 1). The model reveals the developmental nature of intercultural

competence that starts with appropriate individual attitudes (respect and openness toward other cultures, curiosity and discovery) and moves towards interactive internal and external outcomes by means of appropriate knowledge, comprehension, and skills. In this model, better understanding and assessment of intercultural competence follows the identification of desired internal and external outcomes of intercultural competence.

With this framework in mind, Deardorff (2011) argued that intercultural competence and global learning can be infused in curricula by means of local cultural immersion, study abroad as well as bringing up students' cultural backgrounds for in-class activities that will help them take on multiple cultural perspectives. She emphasized that faculty themselves need to get a full understanding of intercultural competence to include it in curricula and pointed on the importance of implementation of intercultural education in undergraduate courses by means of service learning and education abroad. The researcher's choice of service learning and education abroad as tools of intercultural education was determined by her understanding of intercultural learning as a transformational process that leads to the development of students' intercultural competence and transformation by means of intercultural experiences.

Another important research on intercultural competence defined it as “a complex of abilities needed to perform *effectively* and *appropriately* when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini, 2007, p. 9). Similarly, Bennett and Bennett (2004) defined intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts” (p. 149). Both definitions emphasize ability and interaction aspects of intercultural competence and are reflected in most definitions that received 80-100 percent agreement rating in the above-mentioned Delphi study (Table 2), especially close to the definition that received the highest approval mean of 19 out of 20 participants—“ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 249).

Unlike the previous definitions of intercultural competence, Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) take into account an aspect of interaction management: “. . . intercultural competence is the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world” (p. 7). The authors specify that these orientations include nationality, race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, or region (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009). For the purpose of this paper, the author uses Fantini's (2007) definition of intercultural competence.

Intercultural Education

Intercultural competence can be developed by means of intercultural education. Given current ethnic, linguistic, religious, and political tensions based on conditional east-west divide of Ukraine on the one hand, and increased communication with other countries, on the other hand, intercultural competence and intercultural education are needed in the country. Combined, they may promote intercultural understanding, intercultural sensitivity, tolerance, and cooperation between different cultural groups living in Ukraine and beyond its borders.

However, the development and implementation of intercultural education in Ukrainian curricula is in the burgeoning state. So far, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has started infusion of intercultural education in geography, history, and ethics and is currently revising textbooks to address multiculturalism (MESU, 2011). On its website, MESU recognizes and supports intercultural education as a means of promoting understanding between the Ukrainian majority and minorities, foster mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance. MESU

(2011) emphasizes the following aspects of intercultural education—“право на визнання унікальності, своєрідності кожної людини, її духовного внутрішнього світу, повагу до прав дитини на свободу, щастя і всебічний розвиток, реалізацію її здібностей” (Здійснення мовної політики в Україні, пара. 44). *In in the author’s translation*, this means a right on recognition of uniqueness and specific features of every person, his or her spirituality, respect of children’s human rights and freedom, happiness, the whole development of a child and realization of his or her abilities..

Despite numerous education reforms and support of international NGOs, current Ukrainian education system remains authoritarian, with prevailing monocultural instruction. Intercultural education is not explicitly mentioned in either Ukrainian government documents, or national education policy documents. Fimyar (2008) scrutinized selected education policy documents and found inconsistency, controversy, and vagueness in the policy texts. For example, key competencies for a globalized world were described as citizenship skills, multicultural skills, literacy, ICT documents/IT skills, and life-long learning skills with no further elaboration.

Although the State recognizes the importance of implementing intercultural education in higher education, educational policies and teaching methods remain largely monocultural and ethnocentric (Koshmanova & Ravchyna, 2008). Ukrainian faculty still preserve Soviet authoritarian teaching philosophy and teaching methods and are skeptical about innovative education reforms. In addition, teacher candidates are remotely aware of the necessity of multiculturalism and cultural tolerance (Koshmanova & Ravchyna, 2008). In sum, the Ukrainian education system is not prepared to educate students needed for the democratic future of the country. Koshmanova and Ravchyna (2008) suggest that a transition from monocultural education is possible if teacher educators possess multicultural knowledge and skills. That is, faculty and students need to develop an adequate degree of intercultural competence to move beyond xenophobia, stereotypes, and monoculturalism to the reconciliation of east-west tensions, celebration of cultural diversity, and smoother integration in multicultural European society.

Indeed, the roles of higher education institutions and current and preservice educators as agents of intercultural understanding and dialogue cannot be overestimated. In its White Paper on intercultural dialogue, the Council of Europe (2008) pointed out that the university can nurture publicly active ‘intercultural intellectuals’ promote scholarly research on intercultural issues, and implement appropriate intercultural practices in all aspects of teaching. Accordingly, higher education curricula need to include methods and strategies that can prepare graduates to manage and peacefully resolve intercultural conflicts stemming from racism, xenophobia and other negative manifestations of monoculturalism, as well as foster democratic global institutional approach (Council of Europe, 2008). Thus, it is important that higher education faculty and students have both the knowledge of intercultural issues and the ability to implement them effectively in classrooms.

In addition, Hurenko (2009) argued that the priorities of multicultural education in Ukraine derive from the priorities of democratic and multiethnic Ukrainian society. Therefore, they are supposed to (a) reflect the ideas of equity between ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural groups of the country; (b) encourage development of national cultural life that includes majority and minority groups; (c) support understanding and respect of all groups; (d) teach patriotism and tolerance; (e) promote intercultural communication; and (f) solve and avoid intergroup conflicts (Hurenko, 2009).

Future Research and Conclusions

The outlined issues and trends in intercultural education in higher education of Ukraine call for more theoretical and empirical research in the field and its adequate and effective implementation. For example, Yaksa (2009) pointed on scarcity of research in the area, an absence of a scientifically grounded approach of training of future teachers in addressing multicultural issues. In addition, there is a need to create a model of intercultural (multicultural) education that can be used for education and training of pre-service teachers (Yaksa, 2009; Hurenko, 2009). Nikolayenko (2011) points out that east-west cleavage in Ukraine imposes difficulties in adoption of effective education policies. Therefore, a research focused on the development of sound education policies that will embrace the country's diversity and help alleviate internal tensions is needed. Accelerating globalization, gradual transition to integration in the European Union, internationalization of education, as well as current intercultural tensions within Ukraine call for effective and adequate development and implementation of intercultural education in education system of Ukraine, especially in higher education. Interculturally competent professionals are needed in all professional fields. However, intercultural education is a new and underdeveloped area in higher education institutions of Ukraine. Therefore, more research is needed to support its implementation.

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Appendices

Table 1

Definitions of Intercultural Competence

ACC	REJ	M	SD	Item
20	0	3.4	0.7	Understanding others' worldviews
19	1	3.8	0.6	Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment
19	1	3.7	0.6	Adaptability and adjustment to new cultural environment
19	1	3.5	0.6	Skills to listen and observe
19	1	3.4	0.8	General openness toward intercultural learning and to people from other cultures
19	1	3.4	0.8	Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles
18	2	3.8	0.4	Flexibility
18	2	3.8	0.4	Skills to analyze, interpret, and relate
18	2	3.7	0.6	Tolerating and engaging ambiguity
18	2	3.6	0.6	Deep knowledge and understanding of culture (one's own and others')
18	2	3.5	0.8	Respect for other cultures
17	3	3.5	0.9	Cross-cultural empathy
17	3	3.4	1.0	Understanding the value of cultural diversity
17	3	3.3	0.9	Understanding of role and impact of culture and the impact of situational, social, and historical contexts involved
17	3	3.2	1.0	Cognitive flexibility—ability to switch frames from etic to emic and back again
17	2	3.0	0.8	Sociolinguistic competence (awareness of relation between language and meaning in societal context)
17	3	3.0	1.1	Mindfulness
16	4	3.6	0.8	Withholding judgment
16	4	3.4	0.8	Curiosity and discovery
16	4	3.2	0.9	Learning through interaction
16	4	3.1	1.2	Ethnorelative view
16	4	2.9	0.9	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding host culture's traditions

Note: ACC = accept; REJ = reject.

Note. Cited in Deardorff, 2006, p. 249.

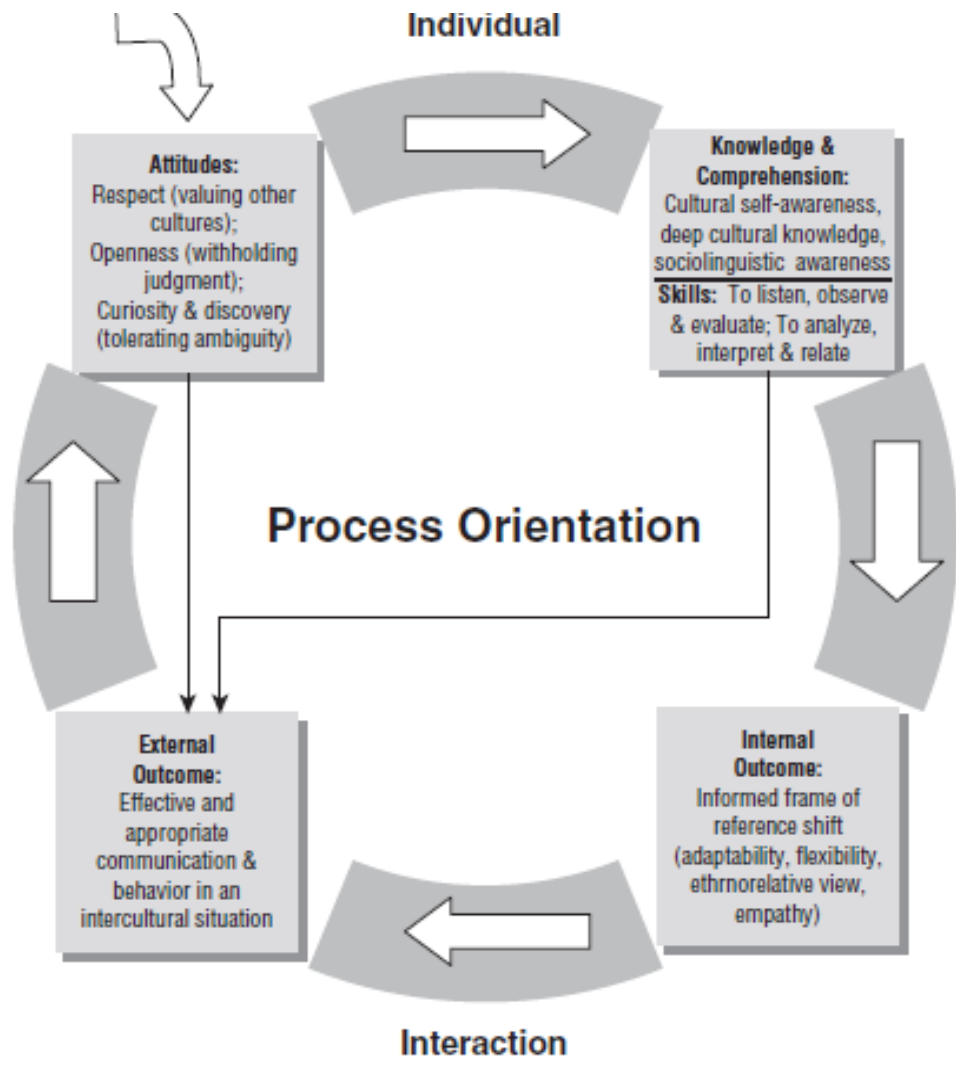


Figure 1. Process Model of Intercultural Competence. Cited in Deardorff, 2006, p. 256.