



УДК 37.017.7:375.27

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN SHAPING PROFESSIONAL VALUES OF POLISH STUDENTS

Vakhrina O.V.,
Graduate student of the Institute of Problems of Education
National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine

The paper highlights the role of intercultural competence in shaping professional values of Polish students. The intercultural competence is studied as an integral component of intercultural communication. Intercultural understanding remains central to the European education policy in growing integration of the world and solving the problems of the contemporary society. The author emphasizes on the essential role of development of intercultural competence through language learning as a means of supporting intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and democratic citizenship. The necessity of foreign language learning in forming professional values of Polish students is examined.

Key words: *intercultural competence, intercultural communication, intercultural education, Polish students, professional values, language training.*

В статті освітається роль міжкультурної компетенції в формуванні професійних цінностей польських студентів. Міжкультурна компетенція розглядається як неотъемлемий компонент міжкультурної комунікації. Міжкультурне взаєморозуміння залишається центральним в Європейській освітній політиці в умовах зростаючої світової інтеграції та вирішення проблем сучасного суспільства. Автор акцентує увагу на важливій ролі розвитку міжкультурної компетенції через вивчення іноземної мови як засобу сприяння міжкультурному діалогу, соціальної згуртованості та розвитку демократичної громадянськості. Розглядається необхідність вивчення іноземної мови у формуванні професійних цінностей польських студентів.

Ключевые слова: *міжкультурна компетенція, міжкультурна комунікація, міжкультурна освіта, польські студенти, професійні цінності, мовна підготовка.*

Вахріна О.В. МІЖКУЛЬТУРНА КОМПЕТЕНЦІЯ У ФОРМУВАННІ ПРОФЕСІЙНИХ ЦІННОСТЕЙ ПОЛЬСЬКИХ СТУДЕНТІВ

У статті висвітлюється роль міжкультурної компетенції у формуванні професійних цінностей польських студентів. Міжкультурна компетенція розглядається як невід'ємний компонент міжкультурної комунікації. Міжкультурне порозуміння залишається центральним в Європейській освітній політиці в умовах зростаючої світової інтеграції та вирішення проблем сучасного суспільства. Автор акцентує увагу на важливій ролі розвитку міжкультурної компетенції через вивчення іноземної мови як засобу сприяння міжкультурному діалогу, соціальної згуртованості та розвитку демократичної громадянськості. Розглядається необхідність вивчення іноземної мови у формуванні професійних цінностей польських студентів.

Ключові слова: *міжкультурна компетенція, міжкультурна комунікація, міжкультурна освіта, польські студенти, професійні цінності, мовна підготовка.*

Formulation of the problem. Entering the European Union, Poland faced new challenges related to their functioning in a new cultural environment of different values, sociocultural rules and norms of behavior. European Education Area opened for young Poles more educational and work opportunities that can be fully exploited by them. Effectiveness in intercultural interaction to a large extent depends on the degree of intercultural competence a person possesses. One must have sufficient skills and knowledge to accomplish his job, must be able to adjust properly in a new culture or multicultural environment, and be able to establish interpersonal relations with coworkers and within the culturally differing community. Thus, intercultural competence through language training is considered to be an essential one in achieving suc-

cess in an increasingly interdependent global society.

Staging jobs. The objective of the article aims at exploration of intercultural competences through language training in the works of Polish scholars and their role in professional shaping of the youth.

The presentation of the main research material. Taking a course on the European Union, Poland considered the education of a person as a priority direction. Joined the European Educational Area, the Polish system of education faced the urgent necessity in developing intercultural competence of graduates. Contemporary challenging society demands from the country an application of new pedagogical achievements in education, focused on the globalization of culture, education and science.



The crucial importance of intercultural dialogue, mobility, education and employability to build a common European future based on the values and principles, which the Council of Europe stands for and promotes, was emphasized at the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Warsaw in 2005 [1].

Therefore, intercultural understanding and intercultural policy determined Poland education strategy, where the essential role belongs to developing intercultural competences in students. Being an integral component in shaping of the professional value of a Polish student, intercultural competence proves its significance in preparing for active citizenship in a democratic society and preparing for the labour market.

It is obvious that to be competitive in contemporary world market requires value-oriented young professionals with deep understanding of other cultures, being capable to show themselves in the conditions of social, political and economic instability, ready to settle conflicts and ability to function beyond stereotypes.

According to M. Michalik [4], "one of the contemporary tendencies is to search for and articulate universal values and moral principles that would assist in establishing the civilization of survival that is the civilization of life and peace". Intercultural learning allows broadening and widespread commonly accepted values and norms, combine points of views and moral stands, as well as to overcome particularism and stereotypes.

P. Mazur [3] points out that intercultural communication is a science of being in a constant dialogue. He believes that inasmuch as each culture can offer its own experiences and values, it leads to the strengthening of the civil society and mutual enrichment of communicators.

In the context of intercultural education J. Pilarska [8] is sure that each of the cultures existing in a given area presents its unique material and non-material heritage handed down from generation to generation. Moreover, the cultural borderland implies coexistence of various systems of moral values, which, in its turn, facilitates pluralism and relativism that reflects the multitude and axiological ambiguity of the intercultural borderland.

Thereby, in the emerging contexts related to economic globalization, being successful means having not only technical and professional competences but intercultural awareness and understanding. According to R. Paszkowska's point of view [9], intercultural competence involves knowledge, skills and awareness. It is obvious that gained knowl-

edge and experience in the course of intercultural education, leads to acquiring the competences that help youth to cope with global interdependence and cultural pluralism.

However, the level of intercultural competence is identified by individual's understanding of different cultures, traditions, one's set of values, attitudes, feelings, or behaviors.

Arguing about effectiveness of intercultural education, J. Pilarska [8] emphasizes on the paramount importance of values in this context. She specifies values as the most often derived from developmental tendencies of a culture and society, philosophical or religious concepts of a person, various forms of social ideology, social policy of a state that are experienced and realized in the process of learning and socialization. The values are interrelated and interdependent. Together they make a foundation for intercultural understanding and communication.

Therefore, in this content it should be stressed on linguistic aspect in intercultural communication. The official documents emphasize on the development of intercultural competence through language learning. In this regard educational policy in the knowledge-based society aims to promote the language training as a means of supporting intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and democratic citizenship.

Language learning serves as a communication instrument in challenging European society. As a powerful symbol of the European Union, languages make a bridge to other people and open access to other countries and cultures, promoting mutual understanding.

Linguistic diversity is becoming a precious asset for Polish graduates, increasingly so in today's globalized world. Being the EU Member State, Poland follows the Resolution of European Commission in promoting:

- multilingualism with a view to strengthening social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and European construction;
- lifelong language learning;
- multilingualism as a factor in the European economy's competitiveness and people's mobility and employability;
- linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue by increasing assistance for translation, in order to encourage the circulation of works and the dissemination of ideas and knowledge in Europe and across the world;
- EU languages across the world.

Being a tool of communication, a language is studied as a part of a shared inheritance. It provides students with developing their interest in culture of a particular country. Intercultural competence, in its turn, obtained through language training, defines a person-



al identity and contributes to shaping his/her professional values.

Therefore, R. Nowakowska-Siuta [7] holds an opinion that educating interculturalism through foreign language training has its own specific dimension that arises from a close relation between language and culture.

According to A. Wierzbicka [11], culture determines ways of speaking, and thus languages develop devices to reflect cultural values. Being a communication instrument in contemporary challenging society, foreign languages will make Polish prospective students perceive their own and other cultures in an intercultural perspective and, as a result, will contribute to raising their intercultural awareness and tolerance of otherness. K. Krzysztofek notes that languages and cultures remain most important distinctive features and physiognomies of communities [2].

Reasoning about intercultural competence A. Nizegorodcew [6] has an opinion of his own: "English as a language of communication in Poland can help Polish youth to co-construct its identity as intercultural users of English as a lingua franca. Putting English into Polish culture, we could acquire intercultural awareness, that is, a more critical attitude towards our own cultures, leading to raised awareness of cultural diversity and tolerance of other cultures".

R. Nowakowska-Siuta [7] emphasizes that language is not seen as a separate skill or capacity in human's cognitive system, but it is linked to and interacts with culture on many levels. Language communication is constantly immersed in situations defined culturally, in which interlocutors negotiate meanings. Therefore, teaching foreign languages cannot be deprived of its natural sociocultural context.

Thus, according to Polish researcher R. Nowakowska-Siuta [7], intercultural competence through language communication is the ability to engage, learn from and work with people whose cultural identity is different from one's own. She is positive about important role of intercultural competence in shaping contemporary personality by:

- gathering information about foreign reality, building awareness of other's country cultural heritage;
- developing the ability to perceive and analyze one's culturally defined behavior;
- developing cultural identity and inclination to preserve motherland's cultural heritage;
- developing ability to identify intercultural misunderstandings and deal with them;
- acquiring a complex intercultural competence;
- developing the ability to describe one's attitude and present subjective points of view, without disrespect towards other's.

In this content language training seems to be an efficient tool, which will allow a young specialist to use intercultural communication to his/her benefit, to meet own objectives successfully in cross-cultural dialogue, to make decisions in accordance to socio-cultural demands in challenging world. Thus, the strongest emphasis in shaping professional values of youth should be done on developing intercultural competence.

B. Tomalin and S. Stempleski [10] present different educational approaches, which, on their opinion, are of a great usefulness in developing intercultural competence as a value:

- identification of cultural symbols;
- work with products of culture;
- study of everyday behavior;
- study of characteristic cultural attitudes;
- study of different styles of communication;
- analysis of values and attitudes;
- analysis and extension of cultural experience.

The scholars stress that intercultural education leads to increased understanding of cultures and a desire to extend knowledge about cultural customs and concepts. Thanks to it, the youth has the opportunity to begin the process of developing cultural awareness and strategies on how to communicate in an intercultural setting, which will certainly be of a benefit in their professional life. Moreover, young people learn how to revise or dispel stereotypes in a constructive way.

Developing intercultural competence will contribute to professional competitiveness of students in their future career. Thus, increasing multicultural diversity and global economic need from future professionals competencies related to multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills: critical thinking, awareness of the subjectivity and relativity of culture and thinking, cooperation with other people, increased competence in using different research methods, cultural and language awareness, better understanding of representatives of other cultures, self-confidence and the ability of expressing own thoughts and opinions.

Today the education policy in Poland is directed to educate a highly-humane, cultural person, who easily uses the modern developments, understands the world and is well-versed in the difficulties of life, perceives different points of view of people, develops his own abilities and interests, improves himself physically and spiritually. This is a person who cognizes the art of living with other people, considers himself a part of the world and takes his place in it. Thereby, the works of Polish authors prove that knowledge of intercultural competences seems to be essen-



tials in preparing for active citizenship of the young generation and shaping professional values of Polish graduates. Being an integral component in shaping of communicative values of a Polish student, intercultural competence helps them in future career to be open minded and curious enough to work together; understand cultural and social world around them; be a suitable candidate to vast range of workplaces demanding mediation between people and organizations of different cultural capitals.

Findings from the study. To conclude, it should be stated that in the age of rapid changes due to globalization and technological advances, intercultural competence in shaping professional values of students may be considered a key aspect, aimed not only at wellbeing and at leisure in one's daily life and surroundings, but at integration, high employability and meeting inter-cultural qualifications. Mastering of intercultural competence through language learning increase employability of Polish graduates, facilitate access to services and rights and contribute to solidarity through enhanced intercultural dialogue and social cohesion.

LITERATURE:

1. Action Plan, adopted at the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, Warsaw, 16 – 17 May, 2005. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode : http://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517_plan_action_en.asp.

2. Krzysztofek K. Poland's Integration with the EU as Cultural Universe / K. Krzysztofek // *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*. – 1999. – № 3. – S. 83–105.

3. Mazur P. Regional, Patriotic and Multicultural Education in Poland / P. Mazur // *Girska shkola Ukrainykh Karpat*. – 2013. – № 8–9. – S. 226–231.

4. Michalik M. Uniwersalizm i Pluralizm – Moralne Standardy współczesności / M. Michalik // *Aksjologiczne Problemy Współczesnej Pedagogiki* / red. Z. Krzysztofek, W. Rabczuk. – Warszawa : Wydawnictwo WSP TWP, 2004. – S. 25–31.

5. Mikułowski-Pomorski J. Jak Narody Porozumiewają się Pomiędzy Sobą w Komunikacji Międzykulturowej i Komunikowaniu Medialnym / J. Mikułowski-Pomorski. – Kraków : TAiWPN Universitas, 2007. – 75 s.

6. Niżegorodcew A. Local Cultures in English: Intercultural Communication in an International Educational Context / A. Niżegorodcew // *Second Language Learning and Teaching* / red. M. Pawlak, E. Waniek-Klimczak. – Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg: *Issues in Teaching, Learning and Testing Speaking in a Second Language*, 2015. – S. 19–28.

7. Nowakowska-Siuta R. The Need for Introducing Intercultural Education in Polish Schools / R. Nowakowska-Siuta // *Porivnyalno-pedagogichni studii*. – 2009. – № 2. – S. 61–67.

8. Pilarska J. Axiology of the Borderlands in the Context of Intercultural Education and Socialization / J. Pilarska // *Pedagogika*. – 2014. – № 4. – P. 250–260.

9. Paszkowska R. Experiential Approach as a Useful Tool for Developing Students' Intercultural Competence / R. Paszkowska // *Eurotimes*. – 2005. – № 1(5). – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode : [http://janek.uek.krakow.pl/~limes/files/e11\(5\)2005/rp_limes1\(5\).pdf](http://janek.uek.krakow.pl/~limes/files/e11(5)2005/rp_limes1(5).pdf).

10. Tomalin B. Cultural Awareness / B. Tomalin, S. Stempleski. – Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1994. – 168 p.

11. Wierzbicka A. Cross-cultural Pragmatics / A. Wierzbicka. – Berlin : Mouton de Gruyter, 2003. – 502 s.