Foreign Language Teaching: Content of Poly- And Multicultural Education

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ABSTRACT: The paper considers foreign language teaching through addressing the issues of quality in education and highlighting the significance of including certain methodologies connected with educating poly- and multicultural personalities in teacher training processes. The mentioned anticipates changes to be made not only to the structure of teaching foreign languages in poly- and multicultural education but also to the educational content. Therefore, what is discussed first relates to a huge dilemma on the terrains of Ukraine, neighbouring and some post-Soviet countries in respect of wrong and/or misleading usage of the terms 'polyculturalism', 'multiculturalism', 'polycultural education', 'multicultural education', etc., as well as disconnection of major researches in the clear differentiation among poly- and multicultural education, intercultural and cross-cultural communication and so on. The paper scratches tentatively on the discrepancies identified in the foreign publications of Russian scholars, which might have been built up on verified research data but fail to meet the factual reality as per surveys and questionnaires conducted by independent trusted global agencies. The principal value of the work may associate with the objectives of poly- and multicultural education described in the main body, and a list of expected qualities of a future foreign language teacher who is poly- and multiculturally diverse and ready to face today's challenges in a globalising world.

KEYWORDS: multiculturalism, polyculturalism, teachers of foreign languages, FL teachers, polucultural education, multicultural education.

INTRODUCTION

The processes of globalization, which are taking place these days in the modern world, affect almost all spheres of human life and expand the global cultural space. In its turn, with this accelerating expansion of language and cultural exchange between the peoples, representatives of a wide variety of social and ethnic groups, an individual is expected, as well as required under a certain circumstance, to get adapted to new socio-cultural conditions [1, p. 96-98; 4; 11; 30]. Modern and, simultaneously, ambiguous processes in education, which can be observed via the culture lens, are characterized by the intensification of cultural contacts between representatives of different countries [22; 23; 33]. In turn, these may be seen to exacerbate the problems of interethnic relations [29]. A society, therefore, is found in need to form citizens of the planetary worldview, citizens that freely express their active life positions, ones that enjoy and exercise positive thinking and are able to navigate in a poly and/or multicultural space [11; 12]. Besides, such people can constructively solve problems of inter- and cross-cultural communication based on mutual understanding, respect, tolerance of each other as representatives of different cultures and ethnicities.

Today, the status of a foreign language is constantly growing its value, which is due to the strengthening of economic, political and cultural ties between countries, on the one hand, and on the other, the internationalization of information exchange and the increasing role of media.

At first, these new realities determine modern requirements to teachers of foreign languages as carriers of linguistic and cultural knowledge and relays of spiritual and cultural values of a nation. Secondly, they also require modernization in education, revisiting training concepts and establishing foundations of poly- / multicultural education. Thirdly, it is required that foreign language teachers would grow their professionalism with mastering an entire set of generally known cultural and professional competencies, which are crucial for professional and pedagogical, academic and research, as well as managerial activities [35].

Following the discussed, it arises relevant to look at the poly / multicultural education of future foreign language teachers via the lens of the content, which in its turn shapes the aim of the paper. The objectives encompass the main three blocks.

Thus, one part of the research will focus on the approached definitions of poly / multicultural education, to be more precise; that will result in revealed challenges of understanding poly- and multicultural education in Ukraine and a number of other post-Soviet countries, on the territories of which the content of poly and/or multicultural education has significantly been subject to

misinterpretations and led to the distorted content plane in pedagogy as a science. Then, based on the definitions found and the one underlying the research, the focus will go to the objectives, goals and microtasks of poly- and multicultural education in foreign language teaching to holster up the hard skills of future foreign language teachers for their future profession. Finally, the research findings will present the quality properties of a foreign language teacher in poly- and multicultural education for the teaching purposes, in particular, which would enable future language teachers enjoy the improved results upon increased performance in class.

METHODS

As regards the research methodology, it is the theoretical value of the works by many domestic and foreign scholars in the fields of pedagogy, culture studies, and foreign language teaching, which mainly paves the principal vectors for the overview and analysis of the material under the current work.

At the same time, it should be stressed out it is not only a great number but also a variety of publications on the subject matter have contributed to significance of the research findings. Acquaintance with the multicultural educational component in the curricula, though in the fields other than foreign language teaching, has also helped a great deal to see the trajectory and implementation paths (see, for example, Banks' multicultural model in nursing).

Descriptive method served its way to highlight the key objectives and goals of poly- and multicultural education in foreign language teaching, based on the data collected, processed, and analysed, after numerous surveys and questionnaires with students and faculty staff at several universities inside and outside Ukraine. The experiment results that we received with the control and experimental groups in the academic years of 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 helped identify and group the main parts / trends / strategies in the foreign language teaching relating to poly- and multicultural education, which resulted in Parts 2 and 3 of the present work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Following Sabatovska (2015), the competency model of a university graduate, on the one hand, includes qualifications that would link their activities to objects and artefacts; on the other hand, it reflects interdisciplinary requirements for the outcome of the educational process, which should be aimed primarily at Man of Culture education [27].

The issue of poly- and multiculturalism, formation of a poly- / multicultural personality has been studied by a great number of domestic and foreign scholars. It is worth mentioning Banks' (2017) multicultural model under which the concept of multiculturalism is imbedded into nursing curricula, and the scientific works of viewing multiculturalism by Priest et al. (2014), Perry et al. (2017) with the latter focusing on its barriers rather than advantages and benefits in communication and social living, i.e., the so-called in-group favoritism and out-group hostility, which was observed by the group of authors, analysed and stated as an obstacle in the multicultural environment [25; 26].

Introduction and cultivation of polycultural education has been seen differently and the term itself "polycultural education" is often presented as the umbrella term in the post-Soviet countries such as Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, etc. It is relevant to note that when they view for discussion poly- and multicultural trends, approaches, ideologies, etc., the foreign scholars address the issues with more accurate and precise wording and terminology as opposed to the linguistic and cultural, and cognitive and psychological phenomena found in the publications of domestic researchers.

Thus, the former – Batelaan & Coomans (1999), Auernheimer (2013, 2018, 2020), Kesidou (2019) attribute scientific importance to study of poly- and multiculturalism in the light of intercultural education [2; 3;5; 6; 20], the others pay attention to poly- and multiculturalism via global education [15; 16], intercultural communication, interaction between cultures, migration pedagogy, cross-culture [22; 14], etc.

As compared with the above, the latter group of researchers, especially as stated in the works of the Ukrainian scholars, would rather refer to the broadest scope and extent possible of the term "polycultural education" [9; 10]. In many works, the terms of polycultural education, multicultural education, inter- and cross-cultural education are used interchangeably [9; 10; 17; 18].

It is anticipated in this paper that in Ukraine and some other post-Soviet countries such phenomena of confusing different terms and/or their interchangeable usage may be explained by the commonly accepted understanding that with both polyculturalism and multiculturalism, and with inter- and cross-cultural education and communication, respectively, it is the recognition of equality and acceptance of being different that matter(s), save the geography – geopolitical stance of the Russian Federation, which fully and without exclusivity impacts the cultural and linguistic aspects in science and education given the country's censorship.

The other constituents of poly- and multiculturalism in pedagogy and education would include cultural and linguistic tolerance, empathy, ability of identification for languages and cultures other than the native one, as well as the right and ability to self-identify. The idea of absorbing other "foreign" elements and that of "sharing" something of own would also refer to poly- and multicultural education in a broad sense of the term.

At the same time, the Ukrainian researchers would go more delicately on specifying challenges and gaps of poly- and multicultural education. For example, as contrasted, Kesidou (2017) clearly states that "intercultural education is defined as a new

conception about education, which requires differentiated practice in educational institutions", foundation of which is "the acceptance that the narrow nationally oriented education is historically outdated and does not correspond to the reality of the 21st century", with reference to Dietrich (1997) [20, p. 150].

In Ukraine, despite the fact that the issues of poly- / multicultural education became significantly topical and even pressing in the end of the 20th century, the theoretical principles of educating poly- and multicultural youth, practical aspects and further implementation of the concept in the educational process solemnly defined the core of pedagogical studies and embodied into the key subject matter of many researches. The number of domestic scholars who are interested in theory, practice, implementation of scientific results in educational settings has been growing from year to year, e.g., Antypova, Boichenko, Bezpalko, Veretenko, Hurenko, Hulych, Broda, etc. [9; 10; 11; 17; 18].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In a multicultural world and a polyethnic society, poly- and multiculturalism in education are becoming an integral part of pedagogical culture. The concept of multiculturalism in education became widespread in the 60-ies of the twentieth century, especially in Canada, the United States of America and Germany due to the increase in the number and role of migrants from developing countries. It is followed that the term "multiculturalism (in education)" originated in Canada because of the opposition of national minorities, when in 1971 the Canadian government officially proclaimed the motto of multiculturalism with Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government that adopted Canada's federal multiculturalism policy. Eventually, Canadian society began to change its attitude towards internal and external migrants. According to Berger (1981), this trend has given positive results in the development and stability of the country [7, p. 18].

With polyculturalism as opposed to multiculturalism, the names of Prashad (2001), Rosenthal and Levy (2010), Bernardo (2013) and Katser and Bazile (2015) in co-authorship with Rosenthal and Levy come to the frontline [11]. The key difference of polyculturalism from multiculturalism lies with interdependence, on the one hand, and on the other, exchanges between the cultures, hence the known aspect in intercultural / multicultural education in Georg Auerheimer's works (1995) on ability for dialogue between the cultures developed further in more recent works [3; 5].

In Ukraine, polyculturalism rather than multiculturalism is a new trend in theoretical research and practice of education. What should be noted here is that this scientific focus has very little to do with the studies of ethnic groups and minorities within a geography, questions of migration, temporarily or permanently displaced people and refugees. Besides, they can but relate to cultural psychology, developmental and personality psychology. Overall, the key aspects in domestic studies on polyculturalism mainly would relate to language teaching, which expressly links to bi- and polylingualism. The prime place is also with axiological and value-oriented approaches in education, where tolerance, acceptance of the "other" and respect are of pivotal importance in life and education. This also explains the fast-growing expansion in pedagogy of the coexisting terms – polyculturalism and multiculturalism in education, seen as absolute synonyms and it is no evil to use them interchangeably in opinions of many Ukrainian researchers [9; 10; 16; 17].

Given the fact that over the recent years there have been many publications on poly- and multiculturalism, it is very distinct to follow that majority of foreign publications highlight more multicultural aspects in psychology and education as compared to polycultural studies. Domestically, polycultural personality of a future foreign language teacher, polycultural education in general will be prevailing as many foreign works studied by scholars and young researchers were analysed as target texts in the Ukrainian, Russian, and Kazakh languages, for example, which consequently resulted in misinterpretation of the terms 'polyculturalism' and 'multiculturalism' and served ground for advancing research and further studies already with terms that experienced minor or major modification, i.e. loss in translation [11, p.719-721].

There are many definitions of the terms poly- and multiculturalism in the scientific literature. Often, these come to define a society, which consists of different ethnic groups, which, in their turn, are interconnected by historically formed circumstances. Next, modern scholars differently treat and understand the concepts of poly- and multicultural education. Thus, representatives of one school may believe that multicultural education focuses on the interconnectedness of cultures [16; 17; 21]. The other scholars would either argue that or suggest that intercultural education would be based on interpersonal relationships between representatives of different cultures, in part described in developmental and personality psychology [6; 8; 24].

All works have made their significant contribution to the development of theoretical and methodological foundations of poly- and multicultural education in the world despite the fact that each scientist and/or researcher may give an interpretation of this concept on their own.

Let us see below what is multicultural education in its widely spread interpretations.
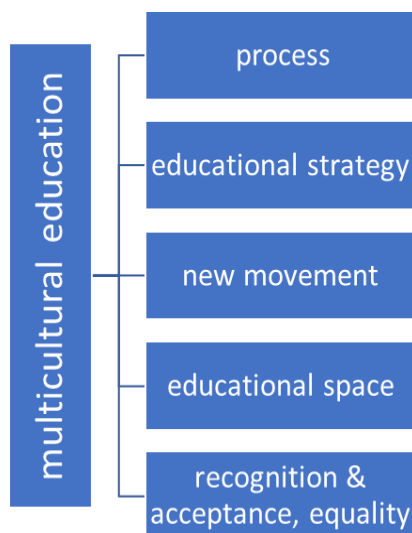
Fig.1. Multicultural education in interpretations

Gollnik and Chinn (1990) present multicultural education as an educational strategy, in which the cultural mentality of the subjects in education is seen positive and central in the organization of the learning process [14, p. 152].

Giroud (1994) highlights many challenges for multicultural pedagogy and considers multicultural education as a process that significantly affects the individual development of personality, i.e., it is a process caused by interpersonal coexistence of two or more cultures [13, p. 282].

Multicultural (*polycultural) education arises in other interpretations as well, in particular:

- Kodzhaspirova (2001) views it as "the idea of a new movement in the field of education" [21, p. 132],
- Palatkina (2001) states that it is "a multicultural educational space" [24, p. 74],
- Vereshchagin and Kostomarov (1985) define polyculturalism as "recognition of equal values and equality of all ethnic and social groups, human awareness of their ethnic roots and respect for other cultures" [34, p. 150].

Therefore, it becomes obvious that poly- / multiculturalism is one of the most important characteristics of modern society, and the formation of poly- / multiculturalism becomes one of the main conditions for effective human interaction in modern society; moreover, it makes a new trend in theoretical research.

The generalization of these interpretations allows for the following conclusion. In educational settings, poly- and multicultural education as well as intentional upbringing in the light of poly- and multiculturalism are aimed at the formation of values, acquisition of knowledge and acquaintance with culture of democratic and tolerant attitude to all ethnic groups, adhering to the principle of equality in education.

According to Suprunova (2000), "the purpose of policultural education is to form a tolerant personality, who is able to actively interact with representatives of other ethnic cultures" [31, p. 52]. Next, the polycultural education should include as well the national and region-related component in the contents of comprehensive education [29], which might be the significant note for multicultural education in connection to ethnic diversity, minorities, race, religion, etc. As it is seen from the research framework and aspects of relevance in the study by Suprunova and Belogurov (2000), there is very little differentiation, if any at all, in approaches and treatment of poly- and multicultural education in the Russian language.

Thus, the poly- and multiculturalism of modern education develops by virtue of generally accepted humanistic and pedagogical ideas of humanity, equality, tolerance, on the one hand. On the other hand, poly- and multiculturalism promotes the higher values in education of young people, especially in connection to recognition of the values borne and respected by different ethnic groups.

Therefore, the objectives in (high) school as to educating the poly- and multicultural personality can aim at the below aspects to be considered and nurtured (also see Fig. 2):

(a) deep and comprehensive mastery of the own culture as a prerequisite for integration into other cultures in case of polyculturalism, in particular,

(b) Forming ideas regarding the diversity of cultures in the world and Ukraine as a country under study,

(c) Educating a positive attitude to cultural differences, which in its turn contributes to the progress of mankind and is seen a condition for self-realization of the individual for both poly- and multiculturalism,

(d) creating conditions for integration into the cultures of other peoples and forming / developing skills and abilities for effective interaction with representatives of different cultures for poly- / multiculturalism,

(e)forming a sense of national identity, dignity, honour through the development of "historic memory", encouraging interest in the native language, culture, and territory – homeland, the history of the peoples and ethnic groups, minorities, etc., with promoting poly- and multiculturalism in education,

(f) Forming conscious, positive value orientations of the individual in relation to the national culture for both poly- and multiculturalism, and

(g) Forming the ability to personal and cultural self-determination.
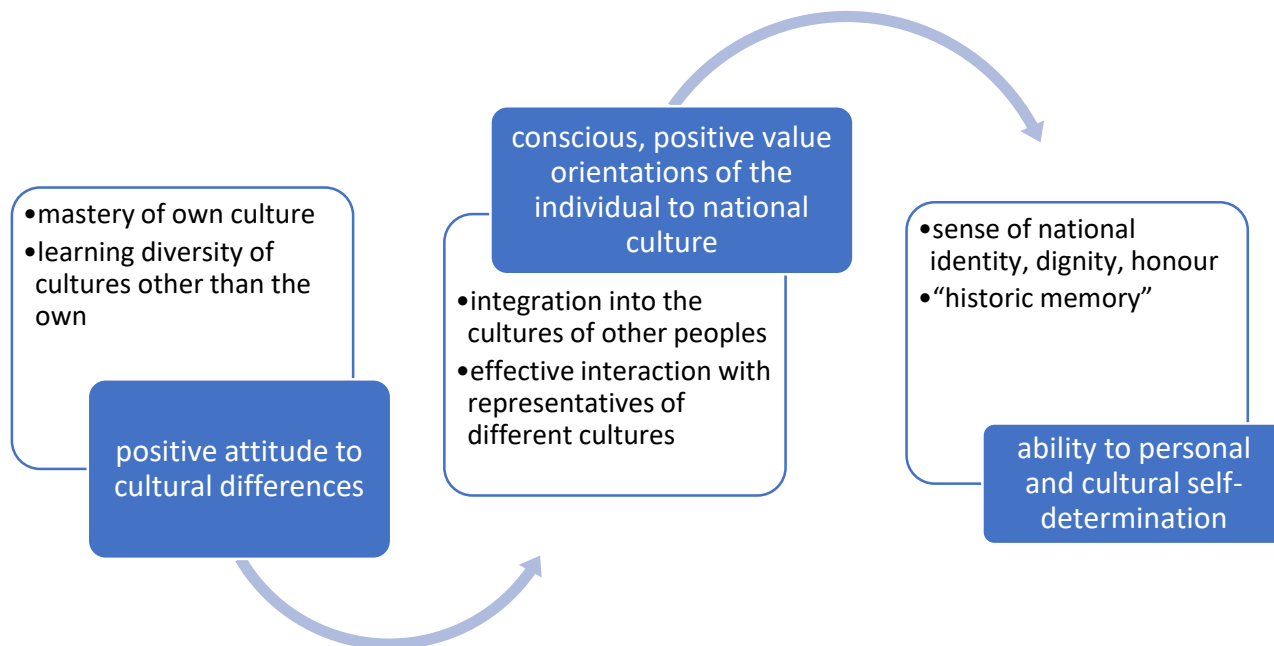
Fig. 2. *Objectives in (high) school as to educating the poly- and multicultural personality in FL teaching*
Source: *Author's approach*

Therefore, following the above it is relevant to proceed and it is anticipated that the main qualities of a poly- / multicultural personality [of a future foreign language teacher] can be defined as follows (Fig. 3):

(a)awareness of poly- / multiculturalism as a phenomenon in a relevant society, from perspectives of humanism, tolerance, and cultural pluralism,

(b) developed national identity and the ability to learn the values of other different national cultures, leading to self-realization in a polylogical environment,

(c) Perception and acceptance of cultural diversity of a society as the foundation for cultural progress of civilization,

(d) The desire and ability to cultural exchange and mutual enrichment,

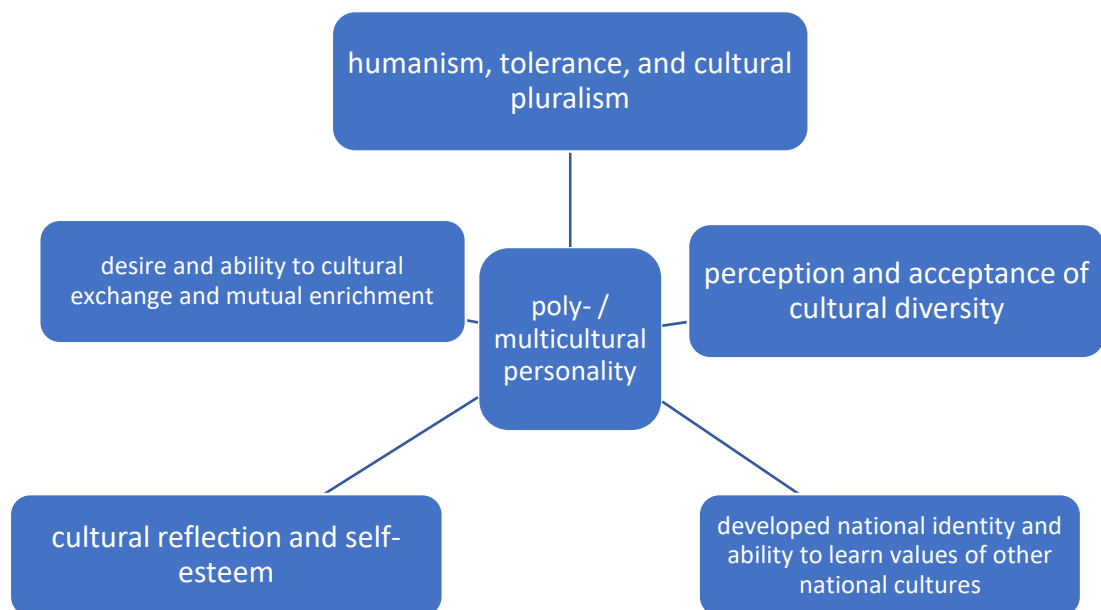(e) Cultural reflection and self-esteem.

Fig. 3. *Main expected qualities for a poly- / multicultural personality of a FL teacher*
Source: *Author's approach*

The findings of the research and the analysis of the data reveal that both poly- and multiculturalism in education may be served via curricula in foreign language teaching for majors and minors that include the educational components to educate students with fostering respect for humanism, tolerance and cultural pluralism.

CONCLUSION

Formation of poly- / multiculturalism in national and/or international classrooms may become an invigorating and challenging process at the same time. To achieve the goal, the content of poly- and multicultural education matters to a great extent. It has to be observed, analysed, processed and taken further what would influence higher performance in foreign languages learning and teaching and grow quality in education – mastering the linguistic and cultural layers of the mother tongue, customs and traditions as per geography, sharing the national specifics and being able to accept and/or absorb the languages and cultures of different peoples and their representatives by integrating values and beliefs, or keep to the national and ethnic and other relevant boundaries while respecting the others, as an example.

There are many conditions and even pre-conditions that should be accounted in advance, while faculty staff start drafting curricula for foreign language teaching. Moreover, speaking a foreign language is no longer a luxury in Ukraine; it is a must today in the globalising world, especially looking towards tourism, migration and study and job mobility. Speaking several foreign languages may increase chances of success where it is not the question of grammar and vocabulary competencies; the others are the competencies that unveil the personal, social and professional potential of an individual.

The paper underlines that despite many definitions and interpretations of poly- and multiculturalism, poly- and multicultural education may find their ways into life, there is a huge dilemma in Ukraine and the other post-Soviet and neighbouring countries. The contemporary scholars and researchers do not always differentiate between poly- and multiculturalism that leads to confusion in term usage and misinterpretations of ideas in majority of cases.

It also urges to emphasize the significant role of the scholars to properly determine the objectives, goals and microtasks of poly- and multicultural education in foreign language teaching. Under the study, it is discussed that educational institutions in foreign language teaching classrooms may strive to aim at the deep and comprehensive students' mastery of their own culture as a prerequisite for integration into other cultures in case of polyculturalism, form ideas as to the diversity of cultures in the world and Ukraine, adopt positive psychology practices and educate a positive attitude to cultural differences, which will contribute to the progress of mankind and help with self-realization of the individual for both poly- and multiculturalism. Also, the content of poly- and multicultural education for foreign language teaching purposes should consider and establish conditions for integration into the cultures of other peoples where relevant, and form, as well as develop skills and abilities for effective interaction with representatives of different cultures. At the frontline remain the matters of forming a sense of national identity, dignity, honour through the development of "historic memory", and encouraging interest in the native language, culture, and territory, as well as the history of the peoples and ethnic groups, minorities, etc., with promoting poly- and multiculturalism in education. Finally, forming conscious, positive value orientations of the individual in relation to the national culture for both poly- and multiculturalism, and forming the ability to personal and cultural self-determination will close the cycle; however, the mentioned is not exhaustive.

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At large, a poly- / multiculturally diversified future foreign language teacher or even a lay person should possess a number of expected qualities, which may serve solid foundation for personal, social and professional growth.

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