

**Intercultural sensitivity of pupils and students from Poland and Ukraine
at various stages of education in Poland**

Summary

The study aims to explore the data on intercultural sensitivity and its functioning on pupils and students from Poland and Ukraine in one space of primary, secondary, and higher education. The majority of Ukrainian participants in this research arrived in Poland following the outbreak of the war in 2022. Poles and Ukrainians represent both genders in the age range from 12 to 22. They live and/or study in Zielona Góra, Poznań, Murowana Goślina, Białystok, Orla, Kraków, Chełmiec and Rzeszów.

The dissertation focuses on key comparative aspects regarding the perception by Poles and Ukrainians of cultural differences and similarities between countries in education, relations with peers, teachers, parents, the Other, the language used in common communication, and the axiological system, including trust and tolerance. Another important research goal is also to identify good practices in working with people with migration experience to indicate a possible educational gap in the Polish formal education system, in the field of intercultural education with people of different cultures, aimed to create recommendations for educational practice in the field of developing intercultural communication and its components, including intercultural sensitivity.

In examining cultural differences between Poles and Ukrainians, the author utilizes the concept of intercultural sensitivity as developed by Guo-Ming Chen and William J. Starosta, as well as Milton J. Bennett. He turns to selected elements of culture and how they are perceived in their lives and interpreted by the people covered by the research. The scientific reflection is supported by the metaphor of culture as an iceberg, the smaller part of which - the tip - means the visible and quickly recognizable part of culture (including language, cuisine). A much larger part of culture (e.g. values, beliefs) is hidden. However, it significantly affects the visible one, which is why it is worth making the effort to explore what young Poles and Ukrainians think about themselves and the culture of their neighboring country. This is precisely the purpose of examining the intercultural sensitivity of Poles and Ukrainians using a semi-structured interview and reviewing and analyzing existing documents (including reports, good practices) related to the activities of Polish schools and universities in the field of intercultural education and intercultural communication competencies.

The dissertation comprises five chapters:

Chapter I. – outlines the theory underlying the dissertation: it begins with a consideration of intercultural pedagogy, and ethnopedagogy, and the importance of interdisciplinarity in intercultural research, including cultural comparative studies; then comes a discussion of the current paradigms in intercultural research; then a description of intercultural competences in selected theoretical concepts and a distinction between the concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism; the next element is the definitions of intercultural communication in the context of globalization and glocalization and the characteristics of the philosophy of dialogue and intercultural philosophy; the previous considerations are united by a systemic analysis of the concept of intercultural sensitivity using a pentabase method, which results in the importance of emotional intelligence and empathy in developing intercultural sensitivity; the chapter ends with a discussion of the concept of culture shock in the context of Ukrainians and a description of selected cultural differences between Poland and Ukraine.

Chapter II. – is an attempt to describe the Polish educational reality after February 24, 2022, in the context of the ways of organizing the education of children and youth from Ukraine in Poland and a comparative analysis of the Polish and Ukrainian education system. The chapter explores what happens in the space of the school – primarily the communication challenges related to learning the Polish language and the cooperation of the school with parents of students from Ukraine are discussed. The author of the doctoral thesis also looks at the role of intercultural assistants noticed by the MEN (Ministry of National Education) and the relevant provisions in the Polish migration strategy, whose presence in a Polish school helps to efficiently build a multicultural class ready for the integration of children and youth from both countries in intercultural activities.

Chapter III. – constitutes the methodology based on the author's research methods in the qualitative paradigm with a discussion of the subject and objectives of the research, a description of the research problems and used methods, techniques, and research tools (semi-structured interview, analysis of documents) as well as characteristics of the research group, the time and methodology of the research. It ends with a presentation of the concept of ethics in research on minors and children and young people with migration experience.

Chapter IV. – devoted to the analysis of the results of the author’s research and the discussions thereof from the perspective of the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews.

Chapter V. – outlines a collection of good practices, recommendations (for institutions and teachers), and research directions for the future within intercultural sensitivity and intercultural education.