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INTERACTIVITY AS AN ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTIC OF A POLY CULTURAL EDUCATION

PH. D. Saydkhasan M. Khadzhiev

Chechen Institute of Advanced Training for Educators
orcid.org/0000-0001-6811-837X
khadzhiev.76@mail.ru

Dr. Abdulahad N. Njudjurmagedov

Dagestan State University
orcid.org/0000-0002-0674-6626
nudurmagedov@mail.ru

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Abstract

The relevance of the research is conditioned by the fact that the matter of human adaptation to conditions of polycultural social environment has not found a conclusive explanation in the known investigations so far. The paper shows that there are discrepancies in the viewpoints of globalists, ethnocentrists, followers of a person's self-actualization and evolutionists. In this respect the present paper aims at comparative analysis of different theories and experience of polycultural education and development of its essential characteristics from the interactive point of development. The lead approach to the research of the matter is the use of interactive concept of education development, which enabled to consider the role of the ethnic culture, inner culture of a person and intercultural dialogue in polycultural education of the youth in an integrated manner. The specific characteristics of interactivity in a polycultural education, and author's concept of interaction of the inner culture of a person and cultural differences as a driving force of apolycultural dialogue are specified, and ten dynamic stages of polycultural education implementation in the interactive concept of development are substantiated in the paper. The materials of the paper represent practical value for the teachers of educational institutions in arrangement of a polycultural education of the youth. The use of the proposed concept in educational activity significantly enhances the efficiency of the youth adaptation to communication in a polycultural environment.

Keywords

Polycultural education – Education interactivity – Intercultural dialogue – Cultural values

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Introduction

In the modern world the social, economic and cultural interests of different peoples and individuals and their cultures are so interconnected that they are bound to work out a common strategy of intercultural communication. At that different variants of cultures' interrelation are possible. There is a viewpoint (globalists)¹, giving preference to the culture of a wealthier, more developed and civilized part of peoples and recommending the other peoples to adopt the values of their culture and follow their path of development. In this viewpoint it is considered that, "globalization becomes some external driving force transforming education under pressure"². In this respect within the frameworks of the dialogue with the mass culture the ideas recognizing the expediency of education with due account for the interests and needs of a person at the given moment in the given place and in accordance with the interests of the given circle of interacting people without looking back at the past life experience of ancestors have become popular.

In another position (ethnocentrists)³ it is proposed to preserve, appreciate and defend history and culture of each people and look for the ways to return the youth to ethnic values of traditional culture and way of life⁴. Ethnocentrism thereat is described as "such a view of things when one's own group is a center of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it"⁵. The followers of the ethnic culture recognition as an initial fundamental attribute of a person consider the ethnic identity as an essential foundation for a human dialogue with another culture⁶. There is a viewpoint (of polyculturalism)⁷ where the appropriate way of intercultural interaction is considered to be the education of a multi-identical person since everybody has to live in a polycultural environment today⁸. However, it should be taken into account that, "the priority in the formation of the youth identity shall

¹ O. V. Gukalenko, Polikulturnoe vospitanie v usloviyakh globalizatsii. from: http://www.lihachev.ru/pic/site/files/lihacht/2010_Sbornik/Tom_1_2010/008_Sekcia_8/012_O.V.Gukalenko.pdf; E. P. Komarova, "Polikulturnoe obrazovanie v epokhu globalizatsii", Perspektivy nauki, num 5 (32) (2012): 131-133; L. P. Kostikova, "Rossiyskoe obrazovanie v usloviyakh globalizatsii i polikulturnogo sotsiuma", Izvestiya Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta. 2008 y V. A. Lukov, Vospitanie kak otvety na vyzovy globalizatsii. 2012. from: http://gatchino.com/knoggg/2006_002.htm

² V. A. Lukov, Vospitanie kak otvety na...

³ T. I. Baklanova, Etnokulturnaya pedagogika. Problemy russkogo etnokulturnogo i etnokhudozhestvennogo obrazovaniya. Saratov: Vuzovskoe obrazovanie. 2015. from: <http://www.iprbookshop.ru/35190>; G. N. Volkov, "Etnopedagogicheskoe osmyslenie obshchechelovecheskikh tsennostey", Razvitie lichnosti, num 2 (2003): 235-243; A. N. Njudjurmagedov y B. B. Dzhamalova, "Vzaimodeystvie obshchechelovecheskoy i etnicheskoy kultury v natsionalno orientirovannom obrazovanii", European Social Science Journal, vol 1 num 11(38) (2013): 30-43 y E. A. Selyukova, "Polycultural education as a problem of the modern education". Nauchno-metodicheskiy elektronnyy zhurnal "Kontsept," Vol 15 (2016): 2336-2340. from: <http://e-koncept.ru/2016/96388.htm>

⁴ G. N. Volkov, "Etnopedagogicheskoe osmyslenie obshchechelovecheskikh..."

⁵ W. G. Sumner, O proiskhozhdenii i sushchnosti etnotsentrizma. 1959. from: www.bimbad.biblioteka/artikl_full.php?aid=546220

⁶ A. N. Njudjurmagedov y B. B. Dzhamalova, "Vzaimodeystvie obshchechelovecheskoy..."

⁷ G. D. Dmitriev, Mnogokulturnoe obrazovanie (Moscow: Narodnoe obrazovanie, 1999); L. L. Suprunova, "Prioritetnye napravleniya polikulturnogo obrazovaniya v sovremennoy rossiyskoy shkole", Pedagogika, num 11 (2011): 16 – 28 y L. G. Tomoshenko Etnokulturnoe obrazovanie v usloviyakh sovremennogo sotsiuma. 2013. from: http://npo.tspu.edu.ru/files/npo/PDF/articles/timoshenko_l.g._46_51_1_1_2013.pdf

⁸ G. D. Dmitriev, Mnogokulturnoe obrazovanie...

be given to the ethnic culture, since it is closer to mentality, has an originally fundamental nature and contains the values of universal human and religious culture”⁹

There is a known viewpoint (of self-actualization) of a person's interaction with the world with the purpose to achieve the top of his/her potential at the same time maintaining independence of the culture and social surrounding¹⁰. The representatives of such viewpoint consider that a person cannot rise above one's own partial existence, finds oneself only in one's own peculiarity and can reach the universal truth only on meeting the opposite individual peculiarity¹¹.

In self-actualization viewpoint¹² people's interaction with culture is acknowledged to be a barrier for the development of a person's potential. The followers of such viewpoint consider that self-actualizing people irrespective of the cultural background call into question the universal spiritual and moral values as means limiting freedom and paralyzing creative activity of a human¹³.

Representatives of yet another viewpoint (evolutionists)¹⁴ that the prospects for the humanity development differ from the previously existing social systems. A contemporary person will be succeeded by “a new superior type for whom science and spirituality will complement one another, scientific forecasts and predictions will start to coincide, and the truth will be recognized in the course of a dialogue of different points of view”¹⁵. The comparative analysis of these viewpoints shows that in each of them the polycultural dialogue is made conditional to some extent upon the level of a person's interactivity upon cooperation with cultural values or representatives of different cultures.¹⁶

⁹ A. N., Njudjurmagedov y S. M. Khadzhev, “Trends of development of the polycultural education in the ethno-cultural social environment. Aktualnye napravleniya fundamentalnykh i prikladnykh issledovaniy: Materialy X Mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii”, North Charleston, USA. 2016.

¹⁰ A. H. Maslow, Motivation and personality (New York: Harper and Row, 1947).

¹¹ V. S. Solovyev, Smaysl lyubvi: izbrannye proizvedeniya (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1991), from: http://az.lib.ru/s/solowxew_wladimir_sergeewich/text_1890_o_liricheskoy_poezii.shtml

¹² A. H. Maslow, Motivation and personality...; C. R. Rogers, On becoming a person: A therapist' view of psychotherapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961) y F. Nietzsche, K genealogii morali. 1990. from: <http://www.nietzsche.ru/works/main-works/genealogia/>

¹³ F. Nietzsche, K genealogii morali...

¹⁴ Yu. Zemun, Vosmoy den tvoreniya. Deti Indigo- fakty i prognozy (St. Petersburg: ID Afina Publ., 2007) y P. M. H. Atwater, Beyond the Indigo children: The new children and the coming of the fifth world (Rus. ed.: Za predelami detey indigo: Novye deti I nastuplenie pyatoy ery) (Moscow: Sofia Publ., 2007).

¹⁵ P. M. H. Atwater, Beyond the Indigo children...

¹⁶ V. A. Lukov, Vospitanie kak otvety na vyzovy. 2012. from: http://gatchino.com/knog/2006_002.htm; G. N. Volkov, “Etnopedagogicheskoe osmyslenie obshchechelovecheskikh tsennostey”, Razvitie lichnosti, num 2 (2003): 235-243; W. G. Sumner, O proiskhozhdenii i sushchnosti etnotsentrizma. 1959. from: www.bim-bad.biblioteka/artikl_full.php?aid=546_220; A. N., Njudjurmagedov y B. B. Dzhamalova, “Vzaimodeystvie obshchechelovecheskoy...”; G. D. Dmitriev y Mnogokulturnoe obrazovanie (Moscow: Narodnoe obrazovanie, 1999); A. H. Maslow, Motivation and personality... y V. S. Solovyev, Smaysl lyubvi: izbrannye proizvedeniya (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1991), from: http://az.lib.ru/s/solowxew_wladimir_sergeewich/text_1890_o_liricheskoy_poezii.shtml

Materials and Methods

Interaction of Cultures in Polycultural Education. Each viewpoint of researchers on evaluation of development of a polycultural education is valuable and true in its own way and has the right to existence. But common to all viewpoints can be deemed the fact that the mechanism of reciprocal influence of different cultures in them is expressed in the dialogue, and different cultures only represent different manifestations of a dynamic dialogical process. Such characteristic of the process of interaction of different cultures or different stages of development within one culture was given by F. Hegel, the famous German philosopher. According to his viewpoint the dynamics of cultures interaction has the features of some specific relay where the wreck of the elements of one culture becomes the beginning of emergence of the elements of a new culture¹⁷ He admitted there at two variants of scenarios: one culture leads the development of another culture, or the local culture brings itself to self-isolation by strengthening and preserving its values.

But at the same time a variety of problems appears associated with comprehension of cultural differences. Polycultural education in many research studies is understood to be the arrangement of the youth interaction through the universal cultural values which are identical in different cultures. The researchers holding such view consider that having taught the youth to recognize and respect these cultural values young people can be brought to respect and recognition of other cultures. In our viewpoint in the sphere of concurrence of cultural values the mechanisms of polycultural education do not even occur and there is no need to create them artificially. In terms of universal cultural values and standards of social relations common for all nations, different sub-cultures become similar to each other, but still retain cultural differences in form of a specific world view, mental personality traits, labour methods, verbal folklore, and standards of traditional style of life. Particularly the distinctive features of these components allow preserving ethnic and other sub-cultures, but they become the matter of doubts and incomprehension. In polycultural education the issue is to arrange youth interaction through the dialogue on these differences. Even universal spiritual and moral values are interpreted differently and have different meaning in self-consciousness and sense of representatives of different cultures. For instance, in Islamic religious morals it is not recommended “to argue with anybody on any matter since a dispute is a reason of many woes and punishment for it is larger than the use”¹⁸. Whereas in cognitive culture people avoiding disputes are called pliable, irresolute and helpless, and pliancy thereof can hide hostility, anger and rage¹⁹.

Many peoples of the North Caucasus had a custom of blood revenge, a binding vengeance to the enemy. But in Muslim canons the murderer takes the most serious sin upon him and does not require punishment from people anymore. The traditional norms of hill people condemn theft of the others' property, but if they had to steal, the meat of stolen sheep was eaten by adult men, but was not given to women and children. Differences of ethnic and religious cultures are observed here. Lately the news about rights of gay men and gay pride parades can often be seen. In different countries they are already perceived as cultural values. Whereas peoples adhering to the values of the eastern culture regard “gay” as the most abusive term for men. It is not customary to bring sexual relationship up for public discussion.

¹⁷ F. Hegel, *Nauka logiki*. 2012. from: <http://detectivebooks.ru/book/21947478/>

¹⁸ A.H. Al-Ghazali, *Vesy deyaniy i drugie sochineniya* (Moscow: Ansar Publ., 2004).

¹⁹ K. Horney, *Our inner conflicts*. 1945. from: <https://ru.scribd.com/doc/24795883/Our-Inner-Conflicts-Karen-Horney>

The peoples adhering to traditions of the western culture consider the guest to be a person or a family invited in advance. The guest leaves the approximate cost of food when the welcome is over. For the peoples of the North Caucasus the guest is any person who happened to be near the house of the host. It is even regarded that a guest brings joy and feeds the family of the host by his/her appearance. Mentioning the presumable expenses for the welcome is considered as an insult of the host.

The specified stark differences in cultures of different peoples serve as a ground for existence, preservation and development of these cultures. Cultural differences can be objectively evaluated only from the viewpoint of the culture itself. Thus, Ph. Shank, a head of the American family consisting of six people and living in Tabasaran (one of the small-numbered peoples of Dagestan) village for ten years came up with an original opinion about interaction of the ethnic, Russian and American cultures. He noted harmful influence of the Russian vodka on the life, health and economy of the Caucasus peoples. He defined his healthy lifestyle as a “lifestyle of a true Tabasaran” in whose national traditions there have never been any alcoholic beverages.

A polycultural (intercultural) communication in the dialogue regime shall be oriented at these cultural differences and aim for the young people to recognize and respect these differences. It is hard to achieve their tolerant behavior without it. At that it is more expedient to use the term “intercultural” which implies independent existence of interacting cultures, whereas polycultural can be understood as about slightly different cultures.

However, cultural differences in this case serve as informative incentives of interactivity, and procedural differences shall take into account the specific nature of the inner culture and identity of representatives of different cultures. The inner culture of a person can become a foundation for interactivity of different representatives within one culture as well, since it involves intension and bio-psychological features of a person. But it happens so that the inner culture of a person being a psychological phenomenon and expressing personality traits, focusing on success and self-expression can contradict the cultural identity and social behavior. Polycultural education can touch deeply the mechanisms of the consciousness development and inspire interactivity of the youth if it relies on the mechanisms of differences in its inner culture.

However, the known research studies in the sphere of polycultural interaction unanimously state that settlement of this problem lies in finding something common between the cultures. But common, identical, universally recognized cultural values do not require a dialogue, they are clear anyway. Whereas interactivity for its foundation requires differences, doubts and discrepancies inspiring free thoughts and senses of interacting parties.

Dialogue as a Foundation of the Intercultural Interaction. Under modern conditions of polycultural environment a more expedient and relevant would be a dialogue of cultures enabling to find new, perfect, compromise variants of interaction and development of cultures, preserving at that the specific values and methods of reproduction of each of the interacting culture. A true equitable intercultural dialogue shall result in mitigation of negative consequences and discrepancies in the unmatched part of cultural values. Cultural differences and inner culture of a person at that become the foundation for cooperation and interaction.

The dialogue can take place with regard to non-concurrences, disagreement and discrepancy of the sense of values in different cultures. Based on such viewpoint, the following aspects of polycultural interaction and intercultural dialogue can be distinguished:

- spiritual and moral values can differ in different cultures, but in any culture they are an instrument of pressure on freedom and desires of a person. Such inconsistency can become a ground for the dialogue of representatives of different cultures and can lead to the true values in life of a modern human on the basis of different senses.

- a human is an intentional being by nature and is in need of creativity, dedicated to excellence, whereas the values established in culture are relatively conservative and do not allow loose interpretation or any other manifestation. Consequently interaction of cultures can be arranged through the dialogue of these two viewpoints.

- life conditions of a human constantly change, so and cultural values undergo respective changes. Under conditions of discrepancy of the dynamics of changes in these life spheres and culture there appear situations of different viewpoints and evaluations of the changes in intercultural dialogues.

- as is known each culture has its own ideology, principles and specific values that determine its status in society, but there is a mass culture also which does not adhere to such permanent parameters but has a persistent daily influence on the youth. The mass culture is focused on the immediate desires and interests of people and is more attractive for the youth, whereas cultural values cannot adjust to changes in their life so quickly. On that basis there also appear the conditions for the dialogue of cultures in their unmatched part the comprehension whereof requires comparison of different evaluations and viewpoints.

Concept of Interactivity of a Polycultural Education. The comparative analysis of the specified conditions for the dialogue between different cultures in a polycultural space brings about the necessity to create a new concept of interactivity in a polycultural education taking into account the specific nature of interaction of the unmatched part of cultural values, different ways of perceiving and evaluating the world phenomena and social events, as well as inner culture of the interacting subjects in a dialogue. The main idea of such concept is that interaction of cultures requires a dialogue in their unmatched, different and even contradictory part of values and ways of the culture development. Particularly in this part there appear different senses and viewpoints of representatives of different cultures, the revelation, comparison and generalization of which can lead to mutual understanding and acceptance of the inherent value of other cultures.

In this respect the “interactivity” category in polycultural education assumes its specific tone. In procedural aspect the pedagogic interaction as an efficient intercultural interrelation has the following characteristics of self-development: cultural differences of participants, openness of the inner culture of a person, voluntary basis and free choice of viewpoint, possibility of self-presentation for everybody, dialogueness of interaction, mediation with the socio-cultural environment, use of interactive facilities and technologies, synergetic nature of generation and development of free thoughts, ideas and projects of participants.

The interactive education then can be named an organized interaction of an educator and students where all participants of the educational process exchange diverse cultural information and simulate situations appropriate for their culture. The participants of such interaction jointly settle the problems of mutual understanding, evaluate the actions of colleagues, dig into real or simulated atmosphere of cooperation to settle social problems and learn to control their behavior on this basis. In polycultural interactive education, cultural

differences and inner culture of a person become a driving force. But at the same time it should be taken into account that basically the intercultural dialogue is an appeal to the inner culture of a person via various means of culture. But the inner culture of a person according to K. Horney can be expressed in a pliable, detached or hostile manner of interaction with the representatives of other culture²⁰. Intercultural dialogues allow creating favorable conditions for the open encounter of various manners of interactivity, the comparison and accommodation of which leads to mutual understanding. The means of such dialogue are speech, gestures, body movements, art, music, observation and use of natural items which are different in different cultures and thus arouse doubts, surprise and wish to understand their value in life of different peoples. The essence and main mechanism to achieve the mutual understanding becomes the interaction of the inner culture of representatives of different cultures.

Another specific characteristic of the interactive education is creation of the atmosphere of goodwill, initiative and openness to new ideas and free exchange of opinions which result in open behavior and mutual understanding. Creating such situations in the course of the polycultural education the youth can be brought to the dialogue in which various viewpoints are negotiated and inner culture will lead to a more rational manner of behavior.

Discussion

The research results enable to determine the concept of the polycultural education in the interactive concept of development by one of the new and promising directions of the youth adaptation to the polycultural social environment. It differs from the known scientific viewpoints by a number of specific characteristics. The use of the category of multicultural education in contrast to the known polycultural one initially assumes independent existence and recognition of differences in interacting cultures irrespective of their capacity, level of development and distribution. The efficiency of the polycultural education in it is associated with the intercultural dialogue the driving forces of which are the cultural differences rather than universal values which are considered in the known studies as the primary ones. The inner culture of a person is considered as a significant driving force of the intercultural dialogue, since particularly it is associated with the formation of consciousness and with different senses of values even within the ethnic and sub-culture. An essential distinction of the research results is the proposed dynamic structure and methods of arranging the intercultural dialogue aimed at achievement of intercultural agreement and youth adaptation to the polycultural social environment.

Conclusions

With due account for the specified characteristics in the interactive concept of polycultural education the following dynamically associated stages of implementation can be distinguished:

- recognition of cultural differences and focus of education on various aspects of such differences;
- identification of the specific nature of non-concurrence and different understanding or inconsistency in each of the cultures involving in interaction;

²⁰ K. Horney, *Our inner conflicts*. 1945. from: <https://ru.scribd.com/doc/24795883/Our-Inner-Conflicts-Karen-Horney>

- determination of the value of unique cultural elements in life of the group, community and peoples representing their culture;
- wording of questions, advancement of ideas, specification of problems enabling to arrange the intercultural dialogue and management of interaction of the representatives of different cultures;
- orientation of the dialogue participants in the specified aspects of cultural differences to prepare for the dialogue;
- dialogue arrangement in the course of which the aspects for rapprochement of different senses of cultural values are searched and the uniqueness status is preserved for each culture;
- adoption of the declaration, agreement on the achieved compromise aspects of a uniform understanding of spiritual and moral values in different cultures;
- development of social trainings for representatives of different cultures on the specified compromise aspects of intercultural interaction;
- arrangement of trainings to master the habits of intercultural behavior;
- identification of the promising directions for further rapprochement of cultural viewpoints.

In the course of intercultural dialogues each of the interacting parties by way of comparing its own and dissenting opinions, common and different in culture forms a deep understanding of the uniqueness and value of the own culture and necessity to recognize the values of another culture. Cultural differences at that become the factor of interactivity, whereas similar viewpoints of participants revealed in the dialogues enable to achieve intercultural mutual understanding and tolerant behavior. Polycultural education of the youth in terms of the interactive concept of development is implemented in several republics of the North Caucasus and has significant positive results in spiritual and moral improvement of the youth social environment. The research enabled to reveal one more aspect of the problem of the interactive polycultural education concerning the polycultural connotation of the content of academic disciplines and technologies of the academic process. The value of such searches is preconditioned by the fact that the academic process takes much more time and has greater influence on the consciousness and behavior of the youth.

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