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Intercultural competences as a modern challenge.
On the example of intercultural education in Euro-
Mediterranean Partnership programs

SUMMARY

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The subject of the research of the doctoral dissertation is the European concept of intercultural competences created, defined, and passed on as part of intercultural education programs, especially as part of informal education¹, conducted directly by the bodies and institutions of the European Union and the Council of Europe and indirectly by non-governmental organizations cooperating with them, such as SALTO or the Foundation Anna Lindh. The concept is created by European institutions, based on European values and goals that are transferred to other cultural areas, including the region covered by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership².

The European concept of intercultural competences is immersed in the European cultural context, which is reflected in its assumptions and documents defining intercultural competences, created by the European Union and the Council of Europe. This concept is based on the values of European culture, especially democracy, human rights, and the rule of law³, and at the same time treats intercultural competences as universal and transferable through education to other cultures, e.g. the Middle East and North Africa region.

The research verified how the European concept of intercultural competences is defined by the program assumptions and other documents of the European Union and the Council of Europe, and how this translates into intercultural education programs (topics and content). It also shows how the concept has evolved over the years. It is worth emphasizing that the subject of the research was not the effects of training and workshops conducted as part of intercultural education in the Euro-Mediterranean region, but only a reflection on the modeling of competences and the contextual approach to intercultural competences. The issue of individualization of learning as a way to increase the learner's subjectivity and as a turn towards emancipatory pedagogy in non-formal education programs was also addressed.

¹ The concept of non-formal education in this work is adopted in accordance with how it is defined in EU and CoE programs. Therefore, non-formal education includes all programs, courses, and training organized by these institutions or non-governmental organizations. In this approach, informal education is omitted as social and family socialization. On the other hand, formal education is the educational systems and policies existing in each Member State, covering school and university education. From: Informal education as an educational tool, Council of Europe, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261404/5_education.pdf/8fa5ad83-c029-469b-baf1-afc55c1fd95f [Accessed 04.12.2022].

² Historically, many names have been created (sometimes involving other cooperation between organizations in the region), including the Barcelona Process, Union for the Mediterranean, Neighborhood Policy, Southern Dimension, Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, EuroMed - a platform for cooperation between the Member States of the European Union and 12 countries of the Mediterranean basin (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Turkey) launched in Barcelona in 1995. The cooperation covers three areas: political issues and security, economy and finance, and social, cultural, and humanitarian partnership.

³ Council of Europe (2008) White paper on intercultural dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity CM 2008 30 (Strasbourg, Council of Europe), https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf [Accessed June 15, 2022].

The European concept of intercultural competences is analyzed in the theoretical and scientific reference on modeling intercultural competences. The main thesis of the dissertation assumes that the concepts of intercultural competences cannot be universal, and therefore the models of intercultural competences built on their basis should be adapted to the cultural context in which they are to be used, as these intercultural competences should be based on cultural values interacting in a given context. If intercultural competence models are to adapt to the cultural context based on the cultural values being interacted with, the competence models must have features that enable responsiveness and interaction. It is necessary to be able to open up to values that are less known to those interacting.

The first chapter deals with culture but not civilization, it talks about intercultural relations but not about the clash of cultures, about cultural development but not about growth. Arguments are presented for departing from the universal treatment of competences, but turning to contextuality. This context is built, among others, through deep values that are the basis of interaction. Therefore, the subject of autotelic and instrumental values was taken up. This chapter also suggests changing the perspective from teaching intercultural competences to conscious, self-reflective learning of these interactions through the subjects themselves. It seems that the change of perspective focused on the learner and his experiences, emotions, transformations, and self-transformations made through meeting the Other, is the greatest challenge of the modern world and intercultural education.

The second chapter deals with the topic of interculturality in scientific research that takes different perspectives, which proves the need to choose an interdisciplinary research approach. We usually talk about intercultural: competences, communication, education, learning, management, coaching, dialogue, meeting, space, etc. What defines a situation as intercultural is the context of meeting representatives of different cultures. To successfully communicate in an intercultural space, intercultural competences are necessary, which is why research on them is the basis for continuing intercultural considerations in other fields. The second chapter proposes an analysis of the concept of intercultural competences and what features make up these competences. A very broad analysis of the concept of intercultural, multicultural, and cultural competences was carried out along with the definitional distinction, as well as the systematization of models of intercultural competences, and the analysis of the phenomenon of the transgression of intercultural competences. In addition, a change in the perspective between teaching and intercultural learning is indicated, following the earlier proposal of the emancipation of education and turning towards the learner. In addition to the

appreciation of human subjectivity and agency in the individual dimension, a place was also allocated to the importance of contextuality, understood as the recognition of the importance of the subjectivity of communities, cultural identities treated as an element of human rights, and thus cultural rights. Finally, the chapter addresses the universality and contextuality of intercultural competences.

The third chapter makes an in-depth analysis of the cultural values of the Euro-Mediterranean region, which are the basis for a contextual approach to intercultural competences. The use of triangulation for data analysis and the selection of research methods made it possible to test the methodological assumptions of the dissertation and reduce the error burden resulting from the limitations and disadvantages of individual methods. Qualitative methods were used, such as critical discourse analysis (activities and cooperation of institutions; development over the years), content analysis (conceptual papers, manuals prepared by the European Council, strategic documents prepared by the EU), interpretive analysis of textbooks, participant observation (exemplary training organized from the funds of these institutions), which allowed for a broader understanding of the subject of research and the context. Looking at the European concept of intercultural competences and its analysis of a specific case study made it possible to indicate the effects of a possible adjustment of the definition of the concept and to show the consequences it may cause in a given cultural context. The research analyzed the concept of intercultural competences in EuroMed from the semiotic, axiological, interactional, and developmental perspective, following the assumptions of Jagiellonian Cultural Studies⁴ implemented in this doctorate because it is the meanings, values, and understanding of the dialogue of cultures as development that determine the research goals.

The European concept of intercultural education has evolved over the years. Not only have the definitions of competences and intercultural education changed, but also the proposed program assumptions, what educators should base the prepared program and materials on. The topics covered during the training changed, and various international events influenced them. Over the years, the scope of policies and their implementation by EU institutions, CoE, and NGOs has increased by increasing the budget, organizational solutions, and parties involved. However, the values on which the assumptions of the concept of intercultural education are based have not changed so often. From the very beginning, the core values of the CoE are democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, which are treated universally. The EU points to more values, such as curiosity, flexibility, continuous learning, and active involvement, etc. are

⁴ L. Korporowicz, Jagiellonian Cultural Studies: Preface, "Politeja: The Journal of the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the Jagiellonian University", No. 2 (20/1), Kraków 2012, p. 7-23.

also emphasized. The analysis of educational materials and specific programs confirms that they are based on these indicated values. Based on these values, book materials and content of training programs are prepared. The values in EuroMed were examined based on previously conducted research by ALF and other available and reliable sources. Although it is difficult to find democracy, the rule of law, and human rights within the values characteristic of the cultures of the broadly understood Middle East, the main values are not explicitly in conflict with these European values. When analyzing the values of these cultures, we can see more similarities (family values) than significant differences (individualism, the role of religion). It is worth paying attention to dignity as a value that determines the attitude to freedom as an important relationship in intercultural competence because it leads to sensitization to interaction, i.e. communication, cultural empathy, and the aforementioned openness, i.e. readiness to learn.

What is the proposed model of intercultural competence to help understand intercultural interaction? Chapter four proposes the Mutual Insight Synergy Model. It consists of three elements: system, integration, and ESB⁵, which go from the outside world, through the conscious and subconscious. For interaction with representatives of another culture, the SMILE+V contextual model of intercultural competence will help us, it is a system that we use outside for observation and interaction. In our mind, we individually integrate so that our values and attitudes as well as the messages and actions we direct to others are consistent with each other. What influences the appropriate values and attitudes is the Theory of Good, which is a certain axiological system rooted in practice (here in the sense of reflection on values). It is deep values such as goodness, truth, and feeling that allow us to create and organize this whole system of dependence on values, cultures, communication, competences, attitudes, choices, etc. The theory of Good, for a better understanding of ourselves and Others, can be used in practice, in everyday, real interactions, although this is a task based on philosophical insight.

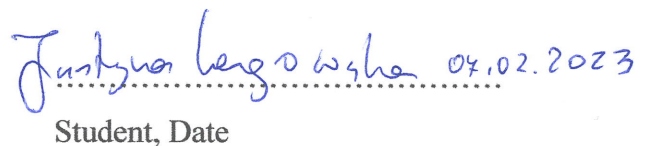
The Mutual Insight Synergy model is responsive and interactive. Intercultural interaction is necessary for him, because only then will he answer the questions asked. The model is an instrument to learn the values of our and other participants of the interaction. The model focuses on axiological, transgressive, deep values created in the context. It is a model that allows you to decode meanings, and understand different values, to then interact and treat such an intercultural experience developmentally. Adapting intercultural competences to the context of the relationship and the encounter is one important task or activity. The second is

⁵ Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) - a technical term in the field of IT. Example of the article with explanation: <https://www.intense.pl/blog/baza-wiedzy,762.html> [Accessed 04.12.2022].

individual, responsible self-reflection about the meaning of the deep values of the individuals involved in this interaction.

What change does the conducted research bring to cultural studies? To develop intercultural competences, we need to understand our values and emotions and those of the other party. Understanding without assumptions, beliefs, structures, or prejudices. Intercultural competences are always revealed in the assessment of a given moment, in a given intercultural context. It is based on the assessment of the situation that we reach for the appropriate knowledge and skills. The most important element of intercultural competences, however, is our attitudes. In the proposed Theory of Good, such "filters" of appropriate attitudes are truth, goodness, and feeling, as conditions for the development, responsiveness, and interactivity of intercultural competences. It is these values that can lead to change and make the meeting an interaction, exchange, and understanding. Intercultural experience understood in this way is creative, and developmental and leads to change.


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