
Intercultural Dialogue and Its Pedagogical Potential

Starpkultūru dialogs un tā pedagoģiskais potenciāls

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Thriving to turn back to the roots of the genuine culture now is a constant signature of the life style changes globally – one can observe it in Europe, as well as in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Vectors of localization are competing with globalization. Meetings and negotiations of the representatives of diverse cultures globally characterizes scope of relations. Global aims of education and upbringing have always been “to make the world better place”. Only dialogue between the cultures, intercultural communication can create common understanding of “the better place”. Pedagogues, using their profession and personal example can facilitate those processes. One can assume, that, implying both constructivism driven understanding of the integrative connection between the cultural experiences of students and pedagogical action, performed by the pedagogue in the definite learning situation, and general concepts of intercultural education, intercultural dialogue in the pedagogical situation is being realized if certain pedagogical conditions are being observed, e.g. biased discourse avoidance, dialogical learning strategies, recognition and practical facilitation of tolerance and diversity, exchange of experiences and their mutual integration. From the viewpoint of intercultural didactics and content of intercultural education one can assume that the interfaith dialogue, at least in Latvia, is being neglected, but it needs specific attention currently due to the raise of the importance of religious identities in the realms of social and individual identifications. Examples of interfaith dialogue would enrich any personal development and cultural competency growth oriented models of intercultural education.

Key words: constructivism, intercultural dialogue, intercultural education, interfaith dialogue, intercultural didactics, pedagogical action.

“If it were only that people have diversities of taste, that is reason enough for not attempting to shape them all after one model. But different persons also require different conditions for their spiritual development; and can no more exist healthily in the same moral, than all the variety of plants can in the same physical, atmosphere and climate. The same things which are helps to one person towards the cultivation of his higher nature, are hindrances to another. Unless there is a corresponding diversity in their modes of life, they neither obtain their fair share of happiness, nor grow up to the mental, moral, and aesthetic stature of which their nature is capable.”

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), *On Liberty*, 1869

1. Living together, not apart: intercultural dialogue as everyday practice

As person grows, he or she learns, gradually getting to know him or her, the others and the world as such. All of the mentioned before happens in a dialogical modus, together with others. The ultimate human lifestyle and the essence of life is social – to live in the presence of other people.

At the beginning of life Riga – let’s call him Theo – go to Ziepniekkalns’ kindergarten, then enter and learn at the Nordic Gymnasium. During his high school years, thanks to the United World Colleges Scholarship, grade 10 he spends at the Hong Kong College and after 2 years returns to become the student at the Stockholm School of Economics, founded by Latvian and Swedish states. After finishing undergraduate studies in Riga and Master’s in Stockholm, Theo – young, educated and self-confident professional – starts his work at the Latvian National Bank. To develop the next plot line – Theo meets a pleasant fellow of Russian origin, the two get married, have bought an apartment in Mārupe, and later every summer are going for the diving adventures to the Red Sea. Well, it should be enough for the insight into the everyday culture of Latvian inhabitant’s daily encounters.

Indeed, every day, even just speaking Latvian, but following the television and the Internet news, listening to radio, we are finding ourselves located in the global world. The world where the currency fluctuations of New York and Tokyo stock exchanges affects loan interest rate of the average Jūrmala inhabitant. In the morning, person, living at Cēsis turns on household appliances produced in Korea. Walking the streets of Riga, along with already traditional Latvian and Russian languages, one encounters German, Russian, English, Spanish language speakers.

Intercultural dialogue in such a world belongs to the survival and success strategies, and this reality has been acknowledged by the business in both Europe and Asia and America for several decades, where one can find intercultural communication and cultural diversity trainings included in education and human resource strategies.

The reader might ask – *Is having a personal experience is not enough to learn the diversity of cultures?* The experience gives great substance, but the means of education helps to develop cultural competence: knowledge and skills integrating attitude towards everyday’s diversity.

Practically representatives of all professions today are working at the conditions of intercultural dialogue, whether they are aware of it or not: interactions at the working environment are takes place between people with different ethnic backgrounds and

religious affiliations, whose native languages are different and the levels of proficiency in intermediate languages – English and Russian – are uneven. Working environment in Latvia does not lack the subculture representatives of immigrants, recent returnees from Ireland, USA, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia¹.

Latvian inhabitants have an international work experience – they have been at the situations where they give professional assistance, support, and information while working at the other European Union state or at the other countries. In a globalized and interdependent world, the ability to engage in tolerant and respectful dialogue is vital, whether one represent himself or herself, community, nation, country.

The dialogue is taking place between the cultures, to be precise – between their representatives. Representatives of the modern sociology are sharing the common opinion that the origins of concepts, ideas, words and other symbolic systems are associated with the society or a group(-s) in which they are used. Therefore, the common approach is to draw the attention at the cultures of the particular social groups: culture of gender, professional and organizational cultures, ethnic/ national, religious cultures, culture of social class and the like. The concept of “culture” is used and interpreted differently in different disciplines of science.

Interdisciplinary nature of the cultural studies at 1960s gave a pretext to create a separate *Cultural Studies* – a new field of research, which itself merged the various research areas and theories: anthropology, communication science, pedagogy. Research object of the Cultural Studies is culture as an everyday life – texts and practices created by people at their everyday life. “Culture” is a term with a complex past, presence and the future. It is still open to the interpretations of the past, present and future. Culture is lifestyle of a nation or group of people and at the same time – continued transfer of this lifestyle (tradition) and creativity.” It consists of generally accepted ways of thinking and behavior, which includes values, beliefs, norms of behavior, political organization, economic activity and the like, which is passed from one generation to the next through learning, rather than in a way of biological continuity” (The Encyclopedia of Social Science, 2000, 129). For a long time the academic literature on intercultural education and communication was dominated by this or similarly worded understanding.

Modern anthropology does not identify culture with a particular nation or people anymore, being aware of the evidence-based studies of how fragmented and differentiated population groups in terms of values and behavior are ones, creating the composite parts of the above mentioned large social groups (*see* Castles & Miller, 2009). Competition, conflict, agreement, compromising characterize human interaction between and inside cultures. Which culture will create and distribute the world’s most delicious fast food network? Which ethical – religious potential will be the most universal? Which education will be the most outstanding? Which will become the superpower of film or music industry? Which country’s athletes will receive most of Olympic medals? Which manufacturers of weapons will monopolize the global market? Which chain of supermarkets will satisfy the endless stream of global consumers’ whims?

Different cultures exist in dynamics, in endless mutual competition. This trend is demonstrated by the French and Dutch restrictive policy against the human rights of Muslims, for instance, hijab wearing; the resistance of *machismo* cultures (dominated by masculinity, violence and force) against equality of women and their professional self-expression, where women ‘s right to be self-sufficient human being is questioned in daily life practice.

Modern anthropology shares the view that every culture is characterized by four elements:

1. active process of the creation and propagation of meanings (conversations, media, education, art);
2. people in positions of power are using available resources in order to define social reality (for instance, expression – *Latvians – people of peasantry* – is being rooted in rural world view of 19th and 20th centuries; it was easy and convenient to sell by the nationalistic parties ruling that time; label – *Riga – the center of sex tourism* – presents the legitimization of parochial values as well presents the demand posed from the Western Europe to the margins of Europe);
3. cultures are not closed systems, a continuous changes are being in the very core of them (for instance, one can compare the lifestyles and values of two generations and can find many differences: for instance, if the generation of 50-60-year-olds traditionally identifies themselves using traditional social identities as ethnic or professional, their children quite often identify themselves in a more global way – by education, belonging to certain subculture);
4. Cultures are by no means homogeneous: there are representatives who wish to preserve the existing order, and there are others who want to create new meanings and new terms – and thus to transform the reality. Whether culture is *harmonious* or *homogenous* is only defined as such in a hegemonic situations where power belongs to the representatives of the same cultural group (Latvians, for instance): concord is being announced to the public, but in reality quite often the underground resistance is burning inside (*see Tomlinson, 1999*).

Using this approach, it is possible to redefine the culture according to social reality of the 21st century. Culture is ways how people in similar positions and sharing similar resources in the social space, are embodying their perceptions, judgments and behavior in similar lifestyle patterns (Vink, 2005, 67).

In what kind of social space scales cultures exists? Acquaintances, family/ kin, subculture, professions, organizations, congregations? Communication between them is routine, but social sciences and even more policy makers are not taking cultural communication across those lines too gently, rather creating an exclusive definitions and categories.

For a long time the concept of *intercultural communication* was understood as communication between people of different ethnic origin. To a large extent this is related to the US – the world's most public culture – ethno-political changes and its' reflection in the agenda of social sciences: the slow advancement of the of the “melting pot” ideology popular in 1960s, where immigrants are assimilated into or deported, to the “salad bowl” as a postmodern celebration of multiple cultures. Namely, if the initial aim was to create a single monolithic American nation of immigrants of various nationalities, it succeeded thanks to three socially shared “authorities” – prosperity, political success in the world and “the American dream”. However, many immigrants chose “double life”: they cultivated their ethnic homeland culture and felt belonging to the US political and legal culture, which rewarded them quite well. Currently, the celebration of ethnic diversity in US has already become an integral part of politically correct discourse.

Europe, as exemplified by the EU's political and ethnic diversity, itself is reconciled to ethnically fragmented structure. *Europeanness* is made up of different fragments of ethnic cultures, which do not tend to converge, but keep their shape – more obvious as it is observed in the United States. On the one hand, it created multi – community settings, on the other – caused conflicts, as recently in France. Perhaps the lack of unifying symbols and values also prevented greater public support to the federalism in the European Union, and, it seems, made impossible the idea of “United States of Europe”, very alive five years ago.

Does ethnicity should be regarded as the most outstanding division line between the cultures? Ethnicity without any doubt still plays an important role at the industrial society, but in a global world, that is becoming increasingly *flatter*, and where borders tend to escape, social identity such as age, occupation, education and other progressively stands to take the ranks historic place of ethnicity.

Globalization demonstrates the profound socio-cultural changes, which have affected all areas of social reality; changes that determine the technology, social relationships, communication, perception of time and space, and the economy (according to Vink, 2005). John Tomlinson, for instance, explains the globalization as “a complex interconnectivity” (*see* Tomlinson, 1999): it reflects interdependence and interrelatedness of the global community. Impact of globalization on culture and communication is characterized by the following elements:

1. The **consumption** as culture: People exercise their citizenship through consumption in a global world: they enjoy opportunities offered, for example, when traveling; political interest in the affairs of state subsidies, participation decreases.
2. The **middle class** is moving away from their ethnic affiliation, the overall activity of its representatives, as well as communication and ethos is getting more international. Middle-class intellectuals of different nationalities represented the latest generation in average perceive life not only as a job or a family, but as self-realization project. Flexible adaptation to others makes life more plural, identities are replaced by one another at the person's presentation at the “exhibition of me to the others on public stage” (rephrasing Goffman; *see idem*, 2001)².
3. **Boundaries between elite and mass culture are gradually fading** in a culture as an entertainment production; style mixtures and diversity, postmodern uncertainty and chaos now are the characteristics of a global culture. For instance, performance *The Latvian Love* at the New Riga Theatre serves as a good illustration of this trend. Also, one can find various architectural styles, “recalling” and using the elements of historical ages and ethnic themes at the modern urban metropolises. Mix of styles is found on television and on the Internet: it present everything that the human imagination is capable of producing alone.
4. Cultural exchanges, cultural trips, visiting artists, foreign films and theater shows illustrates the **growth of mutual influences between cultural regions**. Now it is difficult to separate: this is a *foreign culture*, and this – *domestic one*. So many artists born in Latvia perform and create outside the country: they are selling their paintings abroad; they are living and studying in Vienna, Paris, and Rome. Periodically they returns and organize the exhibitions in Riga exhibition halls or sing in National Opera.

5. Cultures are in the move, as their representatives move. One can ask – whether Buddhism in America is the same as in Tibet, or Muslim in London is practicing the same life style as his fellow in Pakistan, Islamabad? The **cultural significance of places is being replaced by the fluidity of time**. This trend still receives a great deal of opposition from the education systems, the media, politicians, recalling concepts such places as the birthplace, home. Actually, the whole concept of *patriotism* and *loyalty* is being tied to the notion of place.
6. The **relevance of anonymous places** – airports, supermarkets, cafes, and highways is increasing in person's everyday life. There, one can feel alone and anonymous, enjoy this feeling of comfort-related to that status (what some thinkers, e.g., E. Fromm, regard as the *escape*)³. It creates the opposite reality to those sites, which require identification, for instance – a *citizen, professional, Latvian*.
7. **Supranational communities** as the Latvians in Ireland, Poles in Great Britain or Norway, Irish in the USA give rise to both economic and cultural **double identity**. Representatives of those communities live and work in the host country, but financially support by their relatives at the homeland. Since the last century, 1990s, the term “transnational communities” has been found at the lexicon of sociology and political science literature. It is used to describe groups of people who live in one country but retains close links with the country of origin. The researchers introduced the concept of *transnationalism* (Birman, etc.) in order to define a specific state of consciousness: a personal link with more than one nation or ethnic group (Berry, 1994). For example, the Poles living in Chicago start pronunciation in Polish but in many cases finishes with the English ending.

Summarizing the findings of many social scientists, it is relevant to conclude, that cultures exist in a dynamic and in a far from simple and consensual communication: dialogue takes place continuously.

The idea of **intercultural dialogue** is based on the recognition that the world we live in is full of diversity and difference. Everyone in everyday situations does not only experience differences in human opinions and worldviews, values, but even such differences exist between cultures. Dialogue between cultures begins with a desire to learn and understand the different worldviews, opinions and values, as well as to learn from those who look at the world differently.

In contrast to the conflict of values approach, which emphasizes right to the monopoly of “ultimate truth”, and sees implacable juxtaposition of values presented in contacts between Western and Eastern, Christian and Islamic world⁴, dialogue approach explains differences in values by the structure of human motivation and, accordingly, the structure of the behavioral peculiarities of a given social environment.

The child unconsciously learns parental culture-specific behavior and it is being strengthened by the educational institutions (family and school is the most influential socializers), while the adult, happened to appear at a strange cultural environment, tries to fit in by initially mimicking the culture – specific behavior and later adapting it – learning behavioral patterns and interiorizing values (*see* Bandura, 1962; Bandura, 1977).

Effective and mutually enriching dialogue is open and mutually enriching communication, during which we respect each other's point of view; we exchange ideas and explain to each other different way of thinking, and explain the world processes.

This communication potentially enriches each of its members: makes it possible better knowing oneself, to deepen self-understanding and worldview. Intercultural dialogue motivates us to be aware of the *limits* that we use to define ourselves and *the other*, sometimes to overcome these *limits* and even to question some of them.

2. Ultimate aim of Intercultural education – cultural competence

Intercultural dialogue (or conflict) is experienced by everyone who live or work in the environment different from that of his cultural identity. Individual experience, being consciously analyzed in the process of reflexion or unconsciously generalized (generalization of negative experience often cause prejudice), becomes a fundament for permanent attitude regarding intercultural reality. There is a need for intercultural dialogue to have, first, self-competence (who am I?) and, secondarily, cultural competence (where do I come from?): the evaluation of one's own identity, preferably, a critical one, not being rooted in stereotypes (*Latvians are hardworking, diligent, thrifty, educated*).

USA researcher R. Hanvey already back in the 70-ties of 20th century has developed convenient theoretical model that demonstrates this way (*see Hanvey, 1975*). Only by learning oneself, by loving and respecting a culture within oneself, people do not experience it as threatened, and on the fundament of high awareness of culture are capable of accepting cultural experiences of carriers of other cultures and to be enriched from them. Understanding of competence of R. Hanvey is based on two presumptions:

- 1) A person should understand his or her own worldview /“(.) ability of an individual to recognize or to become aware of having a worldview that is not similar to the rest of the world, that this worldview continues to develop under the influences that are often consciously realized, and that others have worldviews that to great extent differ from that of his own” (*Hanvey, 1975, after Kendall, 1996*);
- 2) People are capable of critical comprehension, evaluation and scaling down their own culture-centrism (that may be *ethno-centrism* when one's own culture is being considered the best one and superior; or *religion-centrism* that manifests an idea of superiority of one's own religious identity and belittles the representatives of other religions).

Thus cultural competence is systemic unity of mutually interconnected and supplementing attitudes, behavior strategies and habits, which open possibilities for effective functioning in situations if intercultural communication and which in its activity is realized by institution or professionals in a specific environment⁵.

It is possible to differ three basic elements of cultural competence of this kind:

- 1) Understanding of existing the cultural differences and having a great importance of them in development and functioning of an individual, families, and communities.
- 2) Knowledge about other cultures in connection with an ability to apply this general knowledge for a specific person and situation.
- 3) Ability to identify the unequal distribution of authority in society and to work in conditions of differences of privileges, which are characteristic for intercultural relationship – for instance, to understand and analyze the way how racial distinctions or ethnic or religious differences influence social positions, mutual relationships of people, etc.

- 4) Accommodation to diversity: ability to accommodate one's own professional skills for the needs and cultural origins (e.g., use of languages, way of communication) for people you are working with.

Cultural competence in practice naturally and essentially realizes itself in personal and professional activity as comfortable "navigation" in two or several cultural environments. For specialists of social work it is a necessary tool when, for instance, national and ethnic identity of clients of Riga Night Shelter is classified in numbers of ten and more countries, when Latvia becomes a transit country for victims of human trafficking from Asian countries and Russia, when immigrants and asylum seekers from China, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Moldova seek for social services suitable for them.

3. Tolerance – precondition and basis of cultural competence

In the origins of the term '*tolerance*' there stands Latin '*indulgence*' – ability to accept and respect opinion, religious identity and behavior of another. Tolerance is being connected with the following qualities of a person: ability to accept and to survive in unfavourable conditions and environment, permissiveness – inclination to admit the freedom of choice and behavior, action, in which we express tolerance to something, wish to recognize and respect convictions and practical behavior of others, admission as admission of distinctions, – meaning the free expression of a certain variants of behavior within the limits of certain moral frontiers. Synonyms of tolerance is free will, which is being expressed in behavior and attitude: allowing people to speak, act, and believe their own views by not criticizing and condemning them. Tolerant person does not impose requirements too high for other people, are not condemning them strictly, is liberal towards the views and ideas of other people, even if he or she is not approving them, accepts behavior being different from one's own, admits many things in behavior of people that others are not admitting. Usually such a person acts calmly and relaxed, is not under tension.

Some authors classify tolerance as a moral quality. For instance, Russian psychologists S. Guseinov and I. Kon offers following definition of tolerance, being "moral, ethical quality, which is characterized by an attitude toward interests, convictions, opinions, habits and behavior of others. It finds expression in ability to understand each other and in harmonization of similar interests and opinions without a pressing, using as the main methods explaining and convincing" (see Kon & Guseinov, 1990).

Most of scientists focus on the choice that a person accepts: a choice to be or not to be tolerant toward some specific behavior or phenomenon. It means there are limits to an individual tolerance: a person may have a "zero tolerance" against drug addicts in neighbouring apartment, however, a total acceptance of lifestyle of Chinese immigrants⁶. Declaration of tolerance, which is published in the website of USA education program (www.tolerance.org), speaks of the "tolerance as a personal decision, basis for which is a conviction that every person is worthy. To be tolerant means to accept the the different and to have joy sharing the experience of diversity."⁷

As it is possible to see from the definitions given, it is popular to interpret a tolerance as the quality of a person. One may ask – if there is possible to have an individual choice for being tolerant, maybe it is possible to realize a collective choice and to develop tolerant community, tolerant society, tolerant state and, finally, also a tolerant world?

Tolerance is social, cultural, and religious term that denotes individual and collective practice – not to condemn those people whose conviction, behavior, or action differs from personal opinions on what is preferable. Term *tolerance* is wider, more inclusive, and also better accepted than *acceptance* or *respect*, if it is attributed to controversial positions. Tolerance in politics denote a collective practice – not to condemn those whose conviction, behavior, or action differs from personal opinions on what is preferable. This principle is introduced in legislation by democratic states, whereas authoritative systems apply in practice intolerance as a tool of power. Political tolerance is a mandatory requirement to all active members of public life who are aware of the necessity developing civilized relations both in state and between states. In a practical way political tolerance finds expression in the tools of international human rights and international organizations, as well as in binding legislation to its member states.

UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995) defines tolerance as follows:

Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty, it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.

Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. In no circumstance can it be used to justify infringements of these fundamental values. Tolerance is to be exercised by individuals, groups and States.

Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law. It involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments.

Consistent with respect for human rights, the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. It also means that one's views are not to be imposed on others.⁸

If considering the **individual tolerance practice** broadly and generally we can define it as the ability to accept and respect other people's opinions, religious beliefs and behavior. Tolerant person actively involve in advocacy, is free from dogmata, prejudice, fears; is free from efforts to suppress others.

Tolerance as a social practice, on the other hand, is an ability not to condemn those whose beliefs, behavior or deeds differ from one's assumption of what is preferable. As a social value, expressed through collective action, it is among the preconditions of a unified society. Prevalence of tolerance in the public space smothers

peculiarities and highlights what is mutual, thus creating an environment where it is easier to cooperate and join forces for attainment of cumulative goals. Equality decreases discontent with potential limitations, avoiding undesirable behavior, caused by attempts to improve the situation. Tolerance means respect, understanding and acceptance of the cultures of our world and people's various ways of self-expression. It is facilitated by knowledge, openness and communication, as well as freedoms of thought, conscience and speech. Tolerance is an active attitude based in realization of human rights and basic freedoms (Ibid.⁹).

4. Pedagogical activity as a cultural dialogue

Pedagogical activity is more than an education: goal of it is revealing to a greater extent and activation of human potential (Špona, 2001, 10).

After German theologian and hermeneutic Friedrich Schleiermacher, practice of education (upbringing) is older than theory, and regardless of theory, it has its own self-value (Nohl, 1935, 169; *cited after* Gudjons, 1998). Today social and humanitarian sciences, including social pedagogy, in 20th century are essentially influenced by a constructivism; in pedagogy the legacy of Jerome Bruner, Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget is widely known. Following this opinion, the world is socially constructed: the world of education and upbringing means constructing and reconstructing of knowledge and its meanings, creating of meanings and recreating of them.

Within constructivism in pedagogy (*see* Kilpatrick, 1987, 2-27), the human self-independence is also recognized in learning the world and a new person – a pupil, student – is paid and equal respect, as it happens also within human pedagogy. The difference is that human pedagogy orientates itself more on value-rational activity of teacher (after M. Weber's classification of social activity), however, constructivism in pedagogy facilitates the forming of goal-rational activity in the very pupil.

Constructivism believes a human knowledge constitute the world, not it is knowledge about the world. Knowledge are not fixed, it is created anew all the time through a human personal experience in communication with objects and subjects – other people. Learning process within constructivism is *learning community* – common work of a pedagogue and a pupil or student. Ideologically, constructivism goes beyond the walls of school, it strives for creating social practice more cooperational and being based on general respect. It comes together with the goals of cultural dialogue.

Pedagogical activity by using the approach of constructivism, is being expressed in activities of pupils & students and facilitation of a pedagogue – in promoting learning process by leading interactions, in which among other things in the form of dialogue a cultural content is being transferred, thus constructing an essential background and element of learning outcomes.

Dialogue as a dominating atmosphere illustrates this approach. Paradigm of constructivists facilitates the understanding of how to organize creative and encouraging lectures in classroom: projects, modelling of situations, discussions. This teaching model focuses on creating a meaning by active interaction in social, cultural, historical, and political contexts. The main element in such an action is dialogue of experiences that is realized in collaborative activities – in making decisions, modelling, creating of common narratives.

5. Intercultural education

Combination of terms *intercultural education* is known in Latvia not for the first century – it became topical in the end of 20th century, in close connection with the first steps of bilingual education at schools of national minorities. By getting to know both the *multicultural education* and the more known in European study and scientific literature *intercultural education*, most pedagogues in Latvia have chosen the second – more accustomed in European states, nations and situations of people (*see* Ose, 2014).

Intercultural education is necessary for a life in national state and global society. There exists generally recognized agreement about the goal intercultural education, which refers to life quality in ethnically and culturally diverse society. *Intercultural education* is meant for all pupils. Everyone should be ready for a life in society of many cultures.

There is used the combination of terms *multicultural education*, and both these terms sometimes in literature are replacing each other. UNESCO and European Council recommends and uses in their documents the term *intercultural education*, however, at the same time EDSO (Organization for Security and Co-operation Europe, OSCE) has accepted for use the term *multicultural education*. In USA, Canada and Australia it is accepted using *multicultural*, whereas in Europe, except for Great Britain, the term *intercultural education* is used. *Intercultural* includes more wide and dynamic content, because expresses an idea that cultures are in constant interaction and influence each other, however, *multicultural* usually is interpreted as a static term, putting focus on diversity of already existing cultures.

In accordance to the concept of American pedagogue Sonia Nieto, intercultural education refers to all people, therefore it is meant for everyone, regardless of their nationality, language, religion, gender, race or social stratum. It is possible even to state that for those who represent the dominating culture the intercultural education is needed even more than for others, because exactly they are the ones being educated insufficiently about diversity in society (*see* Nieto, 1992). S. Nieto defines intercultural education: “I define intercultural education in socio-political context as follows: Intercultural education (..) turns against racism, rejects it as well the other forms of discrimination in educational establishments and society, accepts and confirms pluralism (including that of ethnical, racial, language, religious, economic and gender), which is represented by pupils, students, their communities and pedagogues. Intercultural education pervades study programs and strategies as well the interaction between pedagogues and pupils or students, and the entire concept about the essence of learning. Since at the philosophical basis of intercultural education there is critical pedagogy that turns to knowledge, reflection and action (practice) as the basis for social changes, then that way the implementing of democratic principle of social justice is being promoted” (Nieto, 1992, 80).

In what way intercultural philosophy may influence the organization of an educational establishment? Firstly, it definitely would stop tracing the origins of a pupil or student, which unavoidably attributes the state of greater favor to the part of pupils in comparison to others. It means that the composition of workers at educational establishment would represent real diversity of cultures. All-embracing character of intercultural education, possibly, would express itself also in many and diverse learning strategies so that the representatives of all groups of cultures who are learning or studying may gain for themselves something from the alternative, not only traditional

learning methods. Curriculum would be thoroughly reworked by including views reflecting experience of different nations, as well of both men and women. Pupils or students will be encouraged to become critical thinkers. In addition, textbooks and other study materials will reflect a pluralistic approach. Representatives of local society more often would be seen at educational establishments, as they would provide unique and valuable perspective (Nieto, 1992, 109) – this is the vision of S. Nieto.

If we tie together the principles and goals of intercultural education (described by S. Nieto) with anthropological assumptions, cultural expressions, forms of individual expression and goal-orientations provided by German pedagogue F. W. Kron, then we come to a picture, in which an important role is attributed to both learning and interaction (*see* Kron, 1991). It is hard to focus exclusively only on one of the components, however didactic model has grown out of communicative didactic model.

The basic positions of intercultural didactic model ask for examining in a wider context. Didactic models are formed within framework of specific pedagogical paradigm. In concordance with an opinion of professor of University of Latvia I. Žogla (Žogla, 2001), among pedagogical paradigms there is progressive paradigm of “pedagogical progress oriented toward activity of educatee” that is being based on understanding about activity as the basis of personality development, in which there find expression and develop qualities of personality. Quality of which is defined by personal qualities and needs of the subject of activity: In that way a pedagogue organizes the activity of educatee in the closest field of his or her development, or allows to choose by him or herself the activity and thus “goes ahead of what is offered” (Žogla, 2001, 29).

Historically intercultural didactic model since 70-ties of the 20th century has developed within the framework of this paradigm. That is derived from communicative didactic model, which is directed to developing of human attitudes in communication, making contacts and in cooperation. High-level communicative didactics is included in intercultural didactic model (Nieto, 1994, 392-426) where communication is taking place within interaction of different cultures in intercultural environment of learning. Main attention is focused to formation of social competences and experience of a person, as well to the attitude of understanding/ comprehension on hermeneutic level. Main tasks of a pedagogue in this model of interaction is not to allow developing ego-centrism and to help small children to learn how to recognize feelings and obtain information, when solving problems – how to consider different possibilities and alternatives, how to analyze values and opinions of one’s own and others. Pedagogue must know the culture of pupil or student, and carefully must lead his or her pedagogical activity in the direction of development, not silencing down this culture or replacing it with personal one (Shapiro & Biber, 1972, *after* Kendall, 1996).

Intercultural didactic model is based on four basic principles:

1. Balanced perspective of cultural distinctions and aspects that unite, are in common;
2. Development of cultural awareness – conviction about one’s culture and lifestyle being characteristic to it;
3. Understanding of unwillingness of cultural minorities always to accept opinions of majority and legitimized means of social control (legislation, norms, values);
4. Understanding about human pride or belonging to one or another culture (Roth, 1999, 2).

Life in the beginning of 21st century gives witness that people in the entire world are not accepting unequivocally the values of Western culture (faith in progress, technologies, comfort, individual freedom, etc.) (Roth, 1999, 3). People are striving to turn back to their cultural roots – in Near East, Asia, Africa, Latin America, Balkans, Africa. In Near East, these trends have caused essential military conflicts that are based on the willingness turning away from Western values, to cultivate, for instance, the ideals of Islamic culture. How and is it possible at all to settle these conflicts in a longer period? Possibly, intercultural didactics may contribute to this issue. On the question, – *who should teach and who should learn?* – whether Eastern or Western person, or both, giving an answer – people should unite in a *learning community*. Global tasks of education and upbringing always have been – to make this world a better place. However, the perspective of world as a better place should be formed in cultural dialogue, in communication. Pedagogues with their work and personal example may facilitate these processes.

The implementation of intercultural didactic model should be started by clarifying one's own attitudes and prejudices, and by getting to know how they influence work. Further one should strive realizing the educative potential in open dialogue with pupils or students in the diversity of their cultural experiences. Educatees have rights to feel that their individual distinctions are treated with respect and they are considered, as well as are inclusively used in reaching learning goals.

Intercultural didactic model is to be implemented with the assistance of such learning strategies, which would be inclusive, involving, interactive, personalized and oriented toward cooperation. There should be listened to and accepted the views of pupils and students about different cultures: of their social origins, of kind of abilities, of ethnicity and gender. The content of materials that include intercultural perspective is usually emotional, personal, includes conflicts and is interactive. Therefore it is of importance that pupils and students would be provided with wide range of possibilities to express their feelings and emotions by interacting with their peers, and to express also their outrage or being proud of something in discussions, for instance, about the issues of intercultural communication.

The attention should also be drawn to study materials – textbooks, books, digital multi-medial materials; they should demonstrate historical and modern experience of different cultural and ethnical groups, also reflecting problems in the perspective of these groups.

Using the ideas of constructivism about both the pupils' socio-cultural experience and the integrative tie of the pedagogical action, as well as ideas of intercultural education, one could hypothetically assume that a cross-cultural dialogue is realized when the following pedagogical conditions are present: (they can be used as criteria for analysis of one's pedagogical action):

- 1) *The pedagogical action must by all means encourage social communication.* Shaping a positive environment, promoting students' self-realization and mutual understanding is vital in the pedagogical process. The pedagogue refuses power monopoly and builds relationship to students as a communication partner on the basis of equality. The students are urged to think, using their existing experience as a basis.
- 2) *The pedagogue's action is directed at facilitating the students' tolerance for cultural diversity.* With the purpose of learning and acquiring knowledge about various socio-cultural experiences (gender, ethnical background,

and social strata) the pedagogue forms both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups during the study process. pedagogues must try to integrate linguistically or otherwise isolated students in the social life in student group in order to contribute to mutual tolerance.

- 3) *The pedagogue delegates responsibility to the students, which is a sign of shared power or sharing power with students, and provides them with freedom of choice-choosing methods and content of syllabus according to students' individual development.* The pedagogue organizes the learning process with responsibility towards everyone's experience, thus realizing conscious and flexible division of responsibility in the learning process between himself and the student. The students are given an opportunity to build democratic and mutually enriching relations and be responsible for building them.
- 4) *The pedagogue's vocabulary does not contain socio-cultural prejudices against cultural diversity.* Theorists of intercultural education, especially B. Fennimore and S. Nieto, have emphasized that authentic intercultural learning is only possible in terms of *liberating language*¹⁰; simultaneously both language manifestations within education establishments are described as an unsolved problem (Ose, 2003).
- 5) *The pedagogue involves own socio-cultural experience in the pedagogical action, preceded by a reflective evaluation and systematic construction of fragments, that should be included in the process and communicated to the pupils, as well as encourages the students to share their experience (integrative criteria).* Experience is formed within the framework of the social role determined by the social system, simultaneously providing freedom for choice of experience and communication. It can be concluded that experience is formed in a dialogue between frame of social role, which enable transmission of culture, and fulfilled roles of individual freedom, for which language and speech are especially important. It is relevant that the pedagogue harmonizes his/her experience fragments with ones familiar to students – their socio-cultural experience situations. As a result the pedagogue is guiding his action from his experience to student's experience, taking the latter as a starting-point.

In pedagogical activity, there are preconditions/ criteria that overlap because they are mutually integrative: one activity demonstrates the presence of different indicators, or the presence of one and the lack of another.

6. Discussion

In modern Latvia, everyday communication takes place in three or more languages; human communication is replaced by digital forms – also multilingual. Education already for a long time is not a prerogative of school or college: education takes place situative (by doing) and communicative (by being in contact). Study establishments help to put in order what is learned and add an essential content – perceived, comprehended and satiated with values forms. Intercultural dialogue has become an everyday phenomenon, regardless of whether those involved in it are aware of it, or not: gender, age, social stratum, ethnical distinctions arouse an interest or lack of

understanding, sometimes even a conflict. Direction toward respectful understanding is possible only through cultivation of personal tolerance and intercultural competence. Considering the impact of profession of pedagogue in society, of high importance becomes the cultivation this competence in people who “touch the future”, are leading educational process, namely, – in pedagogues.

The same as with motivation for learning, also motivation for being culturally competent is not possible to plant in a person, – that, first of all, is work with oneself, becoming aware of one’s own cultural identity, exposing one’s own prejudice and deconstructing. Considering the important role of religious identity in the identification of personality and in developing individual world of values, intercultural dialogue as an attitude may inherit an important role in the development of intercultural competence – both individually and institutionally. In the world there are common distinguished qualities that popular systems of faith possess, allowing everyone of us to become more loving, to forgive, to dare facing the evil and devastation, to overcome prejudice who are so trivial when comparing with an ethos of religions, and to sacrifice oneself in the name of general goodness. Being aware of the common potential of these teachings means refusing a wish to compare them and to confront them as being higher or lower.

With this moment of awareness there starts *interfaith dialogue* with open borders; something like “system of Schengen” where there is no checkpoints on the borders to check credo, no one is asked to say a catechism by heart, to sing or chant a prayer. In becoming of a new person, a person of future, intercultural education with integrated themes of interfaith dialogue may have an enormous developmental potential: dialogues between people on the level of knowledge or emotions may be boring and superficial, their traces in the development of personality – less observable, however, it is different with dialogues between sacred experiences. Dimension or spirituality and deepness in it gives basis for better self-understanding and creates an interest about huge spiritual richness that the ethoses of religions possess. To the author of these lines the first profound dialogue took place in 1992, at the same time going deeper in the Old Testament of the Bible and in teaching of Dzen Buddhism, not without the mediation of books of psychologist Eric Fromm. It would not be exaggerated to say that the author of these lines is involved in intercultural education being inspired exactly of this experience of this dialogue. Therefore I affirm that interfaith education for both the pupil and student, and adult would provide for more acceptive worldview and perspective.

Conclusion

Pedagogical activity always will be an intercultural dialogue: in pedagogical process taking place in educational environment there meet representatives of different generations, even centuries (it is not for nothing that education scientists use the term of digital world¹¹). Education is being internationalized – both in secondary schools and in universities after Latvia joining EU every year the number of guest teachers and guest professors grow¹².

Idea of cultural dialogue was well known also in social sciences of the 20th century: it can be found in writings of influential French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu: “Cultural capital that a person inherits from family only partially is possible to convert into educational potential. It should not be allowed that school limits and diminishes

cultural capital instead of growing it” (Bourdieu, 1991, 247). Interpreting and adjusting to situation of Latvia, it means a maximum of teacher’s ability to listening in socio-cultural experiences of pupils or students, regardless of the origins and profession of one or another participant of pedagogical process. For instance, it should not be tolerated that a foreign guest professor tries to “convert” Latvian students into the organizational culture of his or her university coming from (even if it was Oxford or Yale) or treats them as domestic students, not considering the differences of experiences. It is not for nothing that the experience of the author, working since 2000 with attachment of foreign guest professors in the context of lifelong learning, shows that cooperation becomes productive only in situations if a guest is well aware of and has learned previously the socio-cultural context of Latvia as well as expectations toward students are rooted among other things also in cultural awareness.

Dialogue based on equal rights is the only productive approach in situation of intercultural education. Paradigm of constructivists facilitates the understanding of how to organize creative and encouraging lectures in classroom: group projects of students, modelling of situations that help becoming aware of community resources (for instance, in social work studies), discussions. This teaching model focuses on creating a meaning by active interaction in social, cultural, historical, and political contexts. The main element in such an action is dialogue of experiences that is realized in collaborative activities – in making decisions, modelling, creating of common narratives. Working in groups, in its turn, gives possibility for diverse experiences of students to meet in dialogic situation – for ethnic, urbane, manhood and womanhood experiences. In the result of cultural dialogue being organized this way, the socio-cultural experiences of both the teacher and student gain possibility to expand: by interaction there happens interchange with the facts of socio-cultural experience, resulting in enrichment of all participants of pedagogical process – also a teacher. Positive effects are enforced by conscious and planned use of media, for instance, feature film and/ or documentary, study video being created by students, audio recordings recorded and made by students; critical content analysis of national and international media, etc.

In the mind of the author of this article, the pedagogical preconditions, being outlined in pages 307-308, reflect the implementation of cultural dialogue. It has been created based on good practices in the result of study¹³ and can be used in studies of pedagogical activities that take place in intercultural environment.

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- 2 Author uses a discourse of American sociologist Erving Goffman on the presentation of self in everyday life: *see* Gofmanis Ē. (2001) *Sevis izrādīšana ikdienas dzīvē* [The presentation of self in everyday life]. Rīga: Madris.
- 3 Фромм Э. (1990) *Бегство от свободы* [Fromm E. Escape from freedom]. Москва: Прогресс [Moscow: Progress], p. 479.
- 4 *See*: Hantingtons S. (2012) *Civilizāciju sadursme* [S. Huntington. Clash of civilizations]/ tulk./ transl. by G. Dišlers. Rīga: Jumava.

- 5 Cross in Rounds, et. al. (1994, 5), cited after: Kirst-Ashman K. K., Hull G. H. (1993) *Understanding Generalist Practice*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- 6 *Zero tolerance* – widespread term applied in USA regarding hate speech in internet of humiliating pupils at school on the basis of cultural identity (*bullying*).
- 7 *See:* <http://www.tolerance.org/about>
- 8 *See:* *UNESCO's Declaration of the Principles of Tolerance* [online]. Available: http://www.unesco.org/webworld/peace_library/UNESCO/HRIGHTS/124-129.HTM
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Author uses the term from *emancipatory language*, the term being coined by USA education theoretician Beatrice S. Fennimore, as opposed to the language full of labels-stereotypes-prejudices; a concept being explained in monography: Fennimore B. S. (2000) *Talk Matters. Refocusing the Language of Public Schooling*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- 11 More on this concept *see* the website of education innovations: <http://www.edutopia.org/digital-generation>
- 12 For statistics about the internationalization processes of education in Latvia *see* website of State Education Development Agency: <http://www.viaa.lv/>
- 13 *See:* Ose L. (2014) “*Skolotājs māca to, kas ir viņš pats*”: *Skolotāju pedagoģiskās darbības analīze bilingvālās skolās un latviešu macībvalodas skolās* [“A teacher teaches what he or her is him/ herself”: Analysis of pedagogical activity of teachers at bilingual schools and at schools with Latvian as learning language]. GlobeEdit/ OmniScriptum GmbH & Co. ISBN 978-3-639-64027-4

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Starpkultūru dialogs un tā pedagoģiskais potenciāls

Kopsavilkums

Tiekme atgriezties pie savām kultūras saknēm raksturo dzīvesveida pārmaiņas Āzijā, Āfrikā, Latīņamerikā. Globalizācijas vilnim pretojas lokalizācijas vektori. Mijiedarbības pasaulē raksturo dažādu kultūrtelpu un to pārstāvju satikšanās. Izglītības un audzināšanas globālie mērķi vienmēr ir bijuši – uzlabot pasauli. Bet skatījumam par uzlaboto pasauli jātop kultūru dialogā, komunikācijā. Pedagoģi ar savu darbu un personīgo piemēru var veicināt šos procesus. Izmantojot gan konstruktīvisma atziņas par skolēnu/studentu kultūras pieredzes un pedagoga pedagoģiskās darbības integratīvo saikni, gan starpkultūru izglītības atziņas, varētu pieņemt, ka izglītības procesā starpkultūru dialogs īstenojas, ja tiek ievēroti pedagoģiskie nosacījumi: aizspriedumainas leksikas ierobežošana, dialogiskas mācību formas, daudzveidības un tolerances atzīšana un praktiska veicināšana, pieredžu mijiedarbība un integrēšana. No starpkultūru izglītības satura un metodikas viedokļa starpreliģiju dialogs ir vēl maz apgūta tēma, kurai vērts pievērsties kaut vai tālab, ka pasaulē reliģisko identitāšu loma pieaug gan sociālo grupu identifikācijas, gan indivīdu pašnoteiksmes līmeņos. Reliģiju dialoga piemēri būtiski bagātinās uz personības izaugsmi, kultūrkompetenci orientētus starpkultūru izglītības m. odeljus.

Atslēgvārdi: konstruktīvisms, starpkultūru dialogs, starpkultūru izglītības, starpreliģiju dialogs, starpkultūru didaktika, pedagoģiska darbība.



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