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Published in the Slovak Republic

European Journal of Contemporary Education

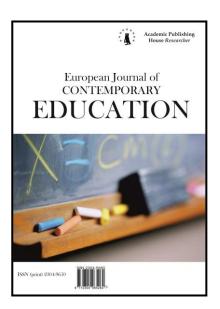
ISSN 2304-9650

E-ISSN 2305-6746 2017, 6(3): 557-564

DOI: 10.13187/ejced.2017.3.557

www.ejournal1.com

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The Polyethnic Competence of Class Teacher as a Resource for Ensuring the Psychological Security of Pupils in a Polycultural Educational Environment

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Abstract

In modern world the environment of any educational institution represents a spectrum of ethnoses, subcultures; and, thereafter, in a certain way, we can talk about it as the multicultural educational environment.

Pupils who realize their national identity often demonstrate intolerance towards representatives of other nationalities which creates a threat for pupils' psychological safety.

This paper addresses the topical issue of the role played by class teachers in ensuring the psychological security of pupils within a polycultural educational environment. The authors present the findings of a study assessing the level of development of polyethnic competence in the average class teacher and establishing the interrelationship between this level and how secure psychologically a high-school student may feel within a polycultural educational environment. The study engaged 58 class teachers and 127 pupils in grades 7 and 8, ages 13 and 14. It has been suggested that fostering polyethnic competence in class teachers is taking on special significance at this time.

Keywords: polycultural education, educational environment, psychological security, class teacher, polyethnic competence.

1. Introduction

The growing interest in the issue of students' psychological security is associated with the current realities of education, which is getting increasingly polycultural. By featuring a wide spectrum of ethnic groups and subcultures, many present-day schools represent a risk factor that can jeopardize the psychological security of pupils. Present-day psychological/pedagogical science contains numerous studies devoted to exploring the educational environment (Baeva et al., 2009).

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Some look into the interrelationships between culturological models for education and the educational environment (A.G. Asmolov, V.S. Bibler, E.V. Bondarenko, V.P. Zinchenko, S.Yu. Kurganov, V.V. Serikov, I.S. Yakimanskaya, etc.), while others explore the 'child-environment' relationship (A.A. Bodalev, V.A. Karakovskii, L.I. Novikov, N.M. Smirnov, etc.) and the relationship between the school's object environment and the emotional state of its subjects (D.Ž. Marković, N.N. Moiseev, etc.).

Of major significance to fathoming the issue of a child's psychological security in a polycultural environment are the ethnological theories and concepts developed by S.M. Arutyunyan, E.A. Bagramov, Yu.V. Bromlei, L.N. Gumilev, A.D. Alferov, E.V. Bondarevskaya, V.I. Gorova, G.D. Dmitriev, N.V. Kuz'mina, R.M. Sulichenko, V.A. Slastenin, etc., which provide insight into the ins and outs of well-directed training of new-type teachers and the content of their professional competence. Some scholars have proposed theoretical models for competence and determined its role within the area of pedagogical activity and the system of training pedagogical personnel (L.I. Belozerova, I.F. Demidova, N.E. Kostyleva, etc.) (Kulikova, 2015).

The all-round development of learners is impossible without promoting equal treatment for members of all ethnic and social communities (Makaev et al., 1999). Failure to uphold the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion in a polycultural educational environment may create additional difficulties for high-school instructors acting as class teachers. The class teacher is a key figure in recognizing the parity of all subjects of and participants in the educational process. It is the class teacher that acts as an intermediary in building a relationship between learners, teachers, and parents and is the creator of the optimum developing micro-environment and a favorable moral/psychological climate in the class (Kulikova, 2008).

Taking a value-based and humane approach to cultural differences, being considerate of the uniqueness of other cultures, having a tolerant and positive attitude toward different behavior and thinking, and not having inflated expectations from communication with representatives of other cultures is of professional significance for a pedagogue (Khazova, Khatit, 2015). A special significance is taken on in this regard by the polycultural training of teachers and fostering in them polyethnic competence — in terms of both professional and general social, personal ethics. This kind of two-sided construal of pedagogues' polyethnic competence is due to the fact that, on the one hand, a teacher is a member of a polycultural society and, on the other hand, they must be prepared to engage in the polycultural education of a growing generation. Therefore, fostering polyethnic competence in teachers must become the critical basis for ensuring the psychological security of pupils in a polycultural educational environment. A figure that could enable this kind of system of nurturing influence is an educator class teacher (Bessarabova, 2007; Manoilova, 2009).

However, it must be acknowledged that there are currently no clear-cut requirements for polyethnic competence in class teachers in present-day schools. Starting in the late 1990s, many a researcher has focused on the study of the phenomenon of tolerance as a factor in harmonizing interethnic relations. But right now there is more to it than just tolerance, which implies readiness to accept others as they are and interact with them based on concord — and that is boosting the polyethnic competence of teachers.

2. Materials and methods

UNESCO's international documents dealing with upgrades to the content of education regard polyethnic competence as a fundamental competency of present-day man. Thus, for instance, in the 'Learning: The Treasure Within' report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century to UNESCO J. Delors highlights some of the key global competencies – the 4 "pillars" of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be (Delors, 1996). Scholars S.E. Shishov and V.A. Kal'nei have provided an insight into the 5 key competencies singled out by the Council of Europe, which include the competencies related to living in a multicultural society and aimed at preventing the expression (and revival) of racism and xenophobia and cultivation of intolerance: accepting differences, respect for others, and the ability to live in peace with representatives of other cultures, languages, and religions (Khazova, Khatit, 2015).

Among the scholars who construe polyethnic competence in a similar vein are Z.N. Safina, M.N. Pevzner, V.O. Buketov, O.M. Zaichenko, E.S. Den'gub, and others. In particular, E.S. Den'gub provides the following insight into the content of polyethnic competence (through intercultural

competencies): "sensitiveness to cultural differences, respect for the uniqueness of the culture of all ethnic groups, tolerance for unusual behavior, a positive attitude about the unexpected, readiness to react to changes, flexibility in making alternative decisions, and having no inflated expectations from communication with representatives of other cultures (Khazova, Khatit, 2015).

The significance of polyethnic competence from the standpoint of polycultural education has been discussed in the works of J. Raven, H. Grosch, W. Leenen, P. Van Den Berghe, L.S. Ilyushin, M.N. Lebedeva, V.P. Roshchupkin, A.I. Surygin, and others. An analysis of these works reveals the following characteristics of the phenomenon of polyethnic competence: polyethnic competence materializes during the process of people's communication and activity on the level of subject-subject relations; includes knowing, understanding, and taking into account the system of values in interpersonal communication; forms based on criteria for tolerance; is a determinant for the formation of one's own identity and positive identification of the different in subjects of the interaction; is manifested in situations where cultures cross and ethnic, cultural, and other differences collide with each other; is an integrated personal quality that enables you to resolve in a constructive manner your objectives related to interaction with representatives of other cultures (Kulikova, 2015).

Central to this study are the works of scholar T.V. Poshtareva, wherein polyethnic competence is viewed as a person's objective notions of and knowledge about a particular culture which are realized through the abilities, skills, and patterns of behavior that facilitate effective interethnic mutual understanding and interaction (Poshtareva, 2009).

Based on the above, the authors construe the polyethnic competence of class teachers as an integrative personal/professional quality that ensures efficient participation in social processes within a polycultural society, effective intercultural interaction, taking account of the polycultural make-up of the team of subjects of professional activity, and utilizing its characteristics to resolve pedagogical objectives, as well as nurturing students polyculturally (Khupsarokova, Khakunova, 2011). The authors are inclined to believe that the structure of the polyethnic competence of class teachers is comprised of 3 more significant components: motivational/value-based, communicative, and social/perceptive.

The motivational/value-based component facilitates the creation of the right conditions for the class teacher to be able to employ their abilities and be oriented toward the student's inner world and interest to learn the Different, as well as realize their personal and professional position, and comprises the following characteristics: being oriented toward another person; wanting to communicate with others; being an active part of the professional world.

The communicative component is construed as a set of abilities and skills that enable the class teacher's interaction with the student and ensure their ability to come up with effective solutions to various communication objectives. This component within the class teacher's social/psychological competence comprises the following characteristics: regulating interpersonal relations among students in the class; enabling effective interaction between instructors and students; facilitating an overall favorable psychological climate in the class.

The social/perceptive component implies the class teacher being prepared to perceive their students in an unconditioned, non-judgmental, and positive manner. In addition, the social/perceptive component is manifested in the class teacher's high and flexible self-appraisal, optimal anxiety levels, and adequate expression of their emotions.

A class teacher who has achieved high levels of polyethnic competence is an active subject of the polycultural educational process with well-developed professional/personal qualities that enable them to effectively resolve all kinds of communication objectives and be successful in performing their pedagogical activity.

Psychological security is associated with taking account of the student's personal characteristics and psychological stability, with its key characteristics being level-headedness, adequacy, fortitude, stability, and resistibility (Eliseeva, 2011; Kulikova, 2015). The authors' theoretical analysis helped establish some of the key criteria for the psychological security of pupils, which are as follows:

1) a sense of being protected (based on experiencing support from one's teachers and parents and a nice attitude from one's classmates (friendliness and non-violence) and behavioral manifestations associated with that);

- 2) a sense of satisfaction (experiencing subjective well-being, emotionally positive treatment on the part of one's teachers and classmates, the class's referentiality, and a sense of satisfaction with one's learning activity and behavioral manifestations associated with that);
- 3) a sense of confidence in oneself (the ability to deal with a sense of alarm at school and handle tough situations that may arise in learning and communication and behavioral manifestations associated with that).

At various stages of work aimed at resolving the main and particular objectives in your research into levels of development of polyethnic competence in class teachers, you may want to make use of a set of specific methods for collecting and processing factual material:

- 1) theoretical: analysis, synthesis, systematization (theoretical analysis of the literature and system analysis and synthesis of scholarly concepts will help gain an insight into the essence of the polyethnic competence of class teachers, including its structure and key components);
- 2) empirical: ascertaining experiment, psychodiagnostic assessment, questionnaires, surveys, testing (conducting the ascertaining experiment will help diagnose and assess the level of development of class teachers' polyethnic competence and determine the psychological /pedagogical conditions for fostering pedagogues' polyethnic competence).

To assess the level of development of class teachers' polyethnic competence and establish the relationship between that level and pupils' sense of psychological security in a polycultural educational environment, the authors conducted a special correlation study. The study featured 58 class teachers and 127 pupils in grades 7 and 8, ages 13 and 14, in 3 schools in the city of Tula. All of these schools are polycultural and multinational. The number of non-native born students in them is 35–65 %. The study was conducted in 2 stages. The 1st stage determined students' current sense of psychological security, and the 2nd one – the level of development of class teachers' polyethnic competence.

To determine one's current sense of psychological security, the authors employed a special questionnaire known as 'Psychological Security in the Educational Environment', developed by scholar I.A. Baeva (Baeva et al., 2009). The authors' analysis of the data obtained revealed that all the groups of research subjects demonstrated a comfortable and favorable atmosphere among classmates (r=0.49). Most of the students were found to have adapted well within the class team, which represented some kind of value to them (r=0.52). Based on the research subjects' appraisal of the significant characteristics of the educational environment, it is worth noting that a high level of satisfaction was recorded both on average and in each sample (r=0.61). These findings lead to the conclusion that a positive student attitude toward the school's educational environment (r=0.45) determines one's satisfaction with the school environment (r=0.47), as well as one's positive appraisal of the relationship with teachers and students (r=0.42), which is a crucial condition for the success of the educational and nurturing processes.

To explore the key components of class teachers' polyethnic competence identified above, the authors utilized a set of psychodiagnostic assessment methodologies (Table 1).

Table 1. Psychodiagnostic Assessment Methodologies Utilized by the Authors

Components of polyethnic	Methodology		
competence			
Motivational/value-based	1. Assessing the Teacher's Professional Orientations		
	2. One's Value-Based Orientations (VO questionnaire)		
Communicative	1. Diagnostic Assessment of One's Orientations in		
	Communication (OC questionnaire)		
	2. I.M. Yusupov's Diagnostic Assessment of Empathy		
	Levels		
Social/perceptive	1. Self-Evaluation of the Ability to Manage the Work of		
	the Class		
	2. I.M. Yusupov's Diagnostic Assessment of Empathy		
	Levels		

The above methodologies focus on the class teacher's value-based orientations; help assess their professional and communicative orientations, empathy levels, and ability to manage the work of the class (Yusupov, 2002; Kulikova, Osipova, 2015; Fetiskin et al., 2002).

3. Results and Discussion

The authors employed the 'Assessing the Teacher's Professional Orientations' questionnaire to determine the pronouncedness of the following factors: being sociable (r=0.65), being oriented toward the academic subject (r=0.52), and being cultured (r=0.42). This which may be interpreted as the outcome of being polyoriented and bear testimony to a pronounced norm of professional orientation.

Using the VO questionnaire the authors assessed the 3 indicators that are crucial to characterizing a class teacher's polyethnic competence: association (communication), morality, and ethics. The statistical analysis revealed that the above values had been formed in equal measure (r=0.72) with the overwhelming majority of respondents.

The results obtained through on the OC questionnaire revealed that most of the respondents were characterized by an alterocentric orientation (r=0.52), which implies being "centered" on the collocutor and oriented toward their objectives. At the same time, teacher's dialogical orientation was manifested insignificantly (r=0.39). The authors are of the opinion that, as one develops personally, a dialogical orientation in communication is no longer viewed by pedagogues as the need to adjust to the child's level and sacrifice your interests for the sake of theirs.

The use of I.M. Yusupov's 'Diagnostic Assessment of Empathy Levels' helped identify some of the dominant empathic trends for class teachers. For the purposes of this study, the more significant parameters are empathy in interacting with children and the summarized indicator of one's empathy levels. The summarized indicator of one's empathy levels was characterized by a very high level (r=0.72). Highly compassionate, these teachers tend to react subtly to the mood of their collocutors. The level of empathy with children in research subjects in all the groups was found to be OK (r=0.52).

The findings from the use of the 'Self-Evaluation of the Ability to Manage the Work of the Class' questionnaire helped establish the fundamental abilities of teachers oriented toward cooperation and fostering the ability to work independently.

The authors had assumed there is a positive (direct) correlational relationship between all of the components of polyethnic competence, as well as between these and its integral indicator, which was calculated by way of adding up all the data on the components identified: motivational/value-based, communicative, and social/perceptive.

To determine the level of development of polyethnic competence in class teachers, the authors introduced the integral indicator (II), which was calculated by way of adding up the data on the components identified: motivational/value-based (MV), communicative (C), and social/perceptive (SP). Afterwards, all the indicators of polyethnic competence were subjected to a correlation analysis (Pearson's r), which helped establish the orientation and closeness of the relationship between them (Table 2).

Table 2. Correlation Matrix Representing the Interrelationship between the Components of a Class Teacher's Polyethnic Competence (statistical significance level p<0.05)

Components of	Pearson's r				
polyethnic competence	MV	С	SP	II	
MV	×	0.52	0.45	0.61	
C		×	0.49	0.59	
SP			×	0.52	

Note. MV = motivational/value-based; C = communicative; SP = social/perceptive; II = integral indicator.

The findings from the statistical processing of the results of the pairwise correlation led to the general conclusion that there is a direct correlational relationship between all the components of polyethnic competence, as well as between these and the integral indicator.

Based on the findings from the authors' analysis of dependency between the components of polyethnic competence, the degree of their significance may be represented as follows: 1) motivational/value-based, 2) communicative, and 3) social/perceptive.

To establish the closeness of the relationship between a student's current sense of psychological security and a class teacher's level of polyethnic competence, as well as to determine the effect of particular components of polyethnic competence on one's sense of psychological security, the authors calculated the pairwise Pearson correlation using the Statistica analytics software package (Fig. 1).

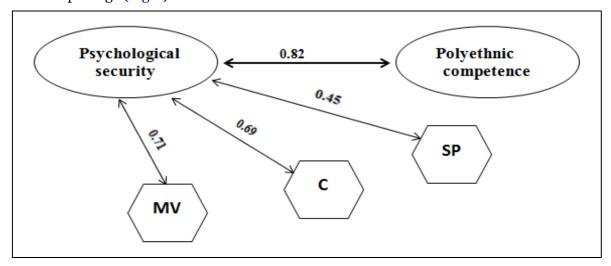


Fig. 1. Closeness of the interrelationship between a student's sense of psychological security and the level of a class teacher's polyethnic competence (statistical significance level p<0.05).

Note. MV = motivational/value-based component; C = communicative component; SP = social/perceptive component.

The findings from the statistical processing of the pairwise correlation led to the following inferences:

- 1) there is a strong positive (direct) dependency between the student's current sense of psychological security and the class teacher's level of polyethnic competence: the correlation coefficient in this case was r=0.82;
- 2) there is a strong positive (direct) dependency between the student's sense of psychological security and the motivational/value-based component of the class teacher's polyethnic competence: the correlation coefficient was r=0.71;
- 3) there is a strong positive (direct) dependency between the student's sense of psychological security and the communicative component of the class teacher's polyethnic competence: the correlation coefficient was r=0.69;
- 4) there is a strong positive (direct) dependency between the student's sense of psychological security and the social/perceptive component of the class teacher's polyethnic competence: the correlation coefficient was r=0.45.

4. Conclusion

The findings from the authors' analysis and summarization of the study's results led to the conclusion that it is the teacher's personal qualities which are the components of their polyethnic competence (motivational/value-based, communicative, and social/perceptive) that determine their ability to create the psychologically safe conditions for the development of their students. These conditions form as part of the interaction between pedagogues and students and may either facilitate or impede the emergence in learners of a fear of self-expression, a sense of alarm, and a sense of being scared of the teacher and their expression of negative emotional states and worry in situations involving self-revelation and demonstration of one's potential.

The class teacher needs to possess a culture of self-acceptance and self-expression in all kinds of qualities, feelings, and deeds, which at times may be quite unexpected. A high level of self-acceptance determines a stable image of not just oneself but of other people as well (C. Rogers). A consequence of having low levels of self-acceptance, according to R. Burns, is inadequate self-appraisal and alienation of certain qualities of one's own, which may engender an inferiority complex and impede the establishment of harmonious relations with oneself and others. A dependency that is well-known in present-day psychology is the harder it is for you to accept yourself, the harder it will be to accept other people. All this perfectly applies to class teachers as well. A class teacher who is unable to accept their students as they are is denying them the right to be themselves. And that may create an insuperable psychological barrier in interacting with them.

In pedagogical activity, it is the teacher's acceptance of their own personality that facilitates their positive acceptance of their students. Teachers who accept themselves are characterized by an understanding attitude toward their students and strive to create an atmosphere of security, trust, and care, which facilitates the emergence in one of the desire to be oneself.

The study's findings have substantiated that the teacher is a key figure in fostering the student's sense of psychological security, and its key criterion is the level of the class teacher's polyethnic competence.

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