

UDC 377.1:37.013.43

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4634.2021.243893>

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ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR POLY-CULTURALISM IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

The article studies the environment in general and environmental approach as part of the methodological framework, in particular, in the educational setting. Thus, the concept of educational environment arises as crucial for the research. It is agreed that the poly- / multicultural environment includes as refers to a variety of cultures and subcultures that surround the individual and the carrier of which s/he is. That is why today almost every other teacher of higher educational establishment and institution is facing a number of questions when they enter the multinational classroom.

The literature study displays the importance of space and time organization of the objective world, which would ensure comprehensive personal development of a future foreign language teacher / instructor in a multinational classroom through a new form of dialogue, and according to Halyna Shevchenko, it is the dialogue of cultures. Therefore, the paper aims to prove significance of polycultural / multicultural educational environment for upbringing creative and culturally rich foreign language instructors. Taken the aim, the objectives of the work relate to identification and determination of the specific phenomenon associated with poly- / multicultural and polylingual environments, on the one hand. On the other, they link with unveiling their roles (those of poly- / multicultural and polylingual environments) in the constructive life activities of the individual, who chooses to become a foreign language teacher, and teacher of languages for specific purposes included, as an effective means of poly- / multicultural education of future professionals.

The theoretical aspects of the establishment and functioning of the educational environment have been under focus of many scholars and researchers (Lizzio, Wilson & Simons; Hutchinson; Whittle, Whelan & Murdoch-Eaton; Manuilov; Mudrik; Prykhodchenko, Rohanova). However, the focus on the educational environment for growing poly- / multiculturalism and polylingualism in a multinational classroom is yet to be studied more profoundly in terms of foreign language instruction, especially instruction of languages for specific purposes (LSP). The needs analysis arises important for methodology of LSP. At the same time, hardly anyone addresses the issues of LSP classrooms in connection with poly- / multiculturalism as compared to polylingualism.

Keywords: polyculturality; multiculturality; language for specific purposes (LSP); future LSP teachers; foreign language instruction; environmental approach; methodology; methodological framework.

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ОСВІТНЄ СЕРЕДОВИЩЕ СУЧАСНОГО ЗВО ЯК УМОВА ВИХОВАННЯ ПОЛІКУЛЬТУРНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

У статті досліджується освітнє середовище у світлі виховання полікультурності, включаючи питання мультикультурності, у процесі навчання іноземних мов, фахових мов включно. Також вагомим складником дослідження постає питання полілінгвальності, з яким зіштовхуються вчителі й викладачі іноземних мов у контексті освітнього середовища. Відомо, що полі- / мультикультурне середовище включає в себе різноманітні культури та субкультури, що оточують індивіда, носієм якої він / вона є. Ось чому сьогодні майже перед кожним викладачем закладу вищої освіти постає низка питань, які потребують ретельного вивчення до того, як відповідні рішення знайдуть шляхи реалізації.

Ключові слова: полікультурність; мультикультурність; виховання полікультурності; фахові мови (мова для спеціальних цілей); майбутні викладачі фахових мов; викладання іноземної мови; освітнє середовище; методологія.

Satement of the problem. Intensive development of modern poly- and multicultural societies is seen as a new form and stage of human development. The cultural component of human life is gaining more and more importance, and thus, necessitates the creation of

modern polylingual and poly- / multicultural educational environment as a “space and time organization of the objective world, which ensures comprehensive personal development through a new form of dialogue – the dialogue of cultures” [13]. Consequently, that enables ensured interaction of many equivalent cultures, when the relationship between the individual and the culture of different peoples is revealed and realized, the relationship, which regulates the dynamics of human values to the culture of other peoples.

Education in the context of dialogue of cultures, first, is connected with formation of relevant personal qualities, which will promote constructive vital activity in the poly- / multicultural environment. Preservation of the ethno-cultural identity would serve basis in this regard. Accordingly, to determine the essence of the process of educating poly- / multiculturalism of a modern foreign language teacher, including a language instructor in the field of languages for specific purposes (LSP), it is necessary:

(i) To determine the features of the phenomenon associated with poly- / multicultural and polylingual environments, and

(ii) To reveal their roles in the constructive life activities of the individual as an effective means of poly- / multicultural education of future professionals.

Challenges of today. It is known that a poly- / multicultural environment refers to a variety of cultures and subcultures that surround the individual and the carrier of which s/he is. Therefore, today almost every other teacher of higher educational establishment and institution is facing a number of questions, for example:

(i) What is the mechanism for dialogue of cultures in the process of learning / teaching foreign languages, if one classroom is represented by different cultures?

(ii) How should one resolve ethnocultural differences in a poly- / multicultural classroom, if any, in the educational process?

(iii) What are the ways to follow and keep a favorable psychological microclimate in a group of students from different social and cultural backgrounds?

(iv) Which factors of personal, professional and cultural development of students are especially important in the organization of education in a poly- / multicultural educational environment of higher education?

These and other questions are answered by the scientific theory of the environmental approach to the organization of poly- / multicultural education of students who are ready to train and become future teachers of foreign languages, LSP instructors included.

Methodology and aim of the research. It is substantiated that relevant methodological foundations undoubtedly make it possible to solve the research questions of any complexity. In a combination of the culturological, axiological, and reflective approaches, the environmental approach in the higher educational space remains critically important as well. The synthesis and analysis, induction and deduction, attributable as part of the methodological framework, enable understand that contemporary education in high school and universities may become more progressive and bring more added value by means of cultivating poly- and/ or multiculturalism with (of) future teachers of foreign languages and LSP teachers in the course of foreign language instruction and acquisition.

The research aims to emphasize the significance of designing curricula in the light and proper consideration of enhanced environmental approach for study, adoptable for cultivating polyculturalism and polylingualism in higher education on a regular basis.

Literature review, results and discussion. The literature review emphasizes that the environment is the subject matter in the study of sociology, philosophy, psychology and, of course, pedagogy. Mudrik (1997) defines the term ‘environment’ as “the surroundings and the set of conditions in which human activity takes place in society” [8].

Following studies in modern pedagogy, the environment acts as a condition under which man exists and lives, on the one hand; as surroundings, an association of people, who connect via the common nature of existence and life, on another hand; and as a social space where the formation of the individual, their development and self-realization takes place, on the other. According to the monolingual comprehensive dictionary of the Ukrainian language, the environment is “a combination of social and living conditions, including the situation, as well as a set of people connected by these shared conditions” [3].

Next, foreign language dictionaries as exemplified in that edited by Yermolenko (2006) specify that the environment is considered one of the most commonly used words and is interpreted as “surroundings, location, external conditions in a particular space, educational, in particular” [16].

The general concept of researchers of the educational environment is based on the consideration of this object as a socio-cultural subsystem. Thus, according to Sedykh and Znikina, “This socio-cultural subsystem is the surrounding social space of man, the zone of their direct activity, learning and development. This contributes to the acquisition of communication experience, the formation of certain competencies and tolerance, adaptation to the

environment” [17, 49–56].

Manuilov (2002) stresses out that the concept of “educational environment” is perceived by researching teachers as a set of specially organized psychological and pedagogical conditions, leading to the development and formation of personality [7].

The theoretical aspects of the establishment and functioning of the educational environment have been under focus of many scholars and researchers. Lizzio, Wilson and Simons (2003) discuss university students’ perceptions of the learning environment and academic outcomes, looking more precisely at implications for theory and practice [6]; Hutchinson explains what educational environment is [4]; and Whittle, Whelan and Murdoch-Eaton focus on studies of the educational environment as a means for its enhancement [14]. Some domestic scholars prioritize the importance of education as upbringing of youth and particularize the means, either teaching or environment or socialization [2; 7; 8]. Some specify the environment itself as creative [9], educational [12; 15], educational along with social and cultural environment [11] while some works relate to pedagogical foundations for forming creative educational and upbringing environment for the Humanities students [10].

The creation of the educational environment should be based on the value-semantic dominants of perception of the world and man, which change in the environment and with the help of the environment. As Bim-Bad notes, “Independent human interaction with the environment, in which the need for correct thinking is laid down in advance, is what provides a strong and deep education” [2]. The educational environment, according to the scholar is “a sphere of human activity that is constantly expanding; it includes the growing richness of its connections with nature and cultural objects, i.e. things created by man and for man, by the social environment” [2].

The nature of the educational environment is determined by the goals of education, which are formed in accordance with the external requirements of modern educational institutions. The educational environment, in turn, makes internal demands on education. Therefore, any educational environment must constantly change in accordance with the external and internal requirements as reasoned by Yasvin [15]. To add, Krylova interprets the educational environment as a social environment and a space of interconnection of the components in the educational processes. This is a space, in which those, who study, cannot be outside society, outside cultural ties and relations with the society, gaining experience (sometimes negative) of independent activity [5]. Another Russian researcher Belyayev treats

educational environment as “an educational room of a particular educational institution”, which, in fact, models this environment with the pedagogical activities of teachers and students, i.e. subjects of education [1]. In this case, the educational environment is considered from the standpoint of interaction of the subjects of the educational process with the environment, which is represented by a set of conditions under which the formation of personality and opportunities for their development occur according to a given pattern.

Therefore, it is the environmental approach in education and upbringing, based on a solid basis of accumulated knowledge about the environment, which allows formalizing, operationalizing, and rationalizing in practice the processes of development and use of the environment in the educational process. To this part, the environment is understood as surroundings of man and man interprets it subjectively, on the one hand, and on the other, as a whole, in the dialectical unity of its dynamic and static elements. In this context, Manuilov, the author of the environmental approach in education, proposes to consider that the individual is the result of environmental influences and a subject who has the values of the environment (spiritual, social, material, etc.) [7].

Further, the author believes that the environment influencing the formation of personality has a dual nature: here, the environment provides freedom of choice and thus develops the personality, there, the environment limits the choice of opportunities, inhibiting the formation. The assumption that the environment is able to develop individuality and shape it through a certain way of life social type, determines its crucial role in human life, allows considering it as a potential means of managing the formation of human personality [7].

Conclusion. Therefore, a systemic approach requires considering the education of poly- and/or multiculturalism of future LSP teachers of philology as a complex multifaceted process, on the one hand, and on the other, as a pedagogical system. Since the formation of a poly- and/or multicultural personality of an LSP teacher in the area of foreign language instruction occurs in the course of doing several languages, it is underlined that the system of foreign language education should be viewed as a metasystem in relation to the process of educating students future LSP teachers and forming / cultivating their relevant poly- and/or multicultural skills and competencies in the framework of poly- and/or multiculturalism. In turn, the process of poly- and/or multicultural education also acts as a holistic pedagogical system, as part of the macrosystem of foreign language

instruction in education, so the concept of its construction is based on a set of general methodological, general didactic and specific principles that take into account the nature and peculiarities of foreign language instruction and acquisition in education.

It is found reasonable to look further into these concepts by diving deeper into varieties of polylingual and multilingual classrooms and analyse the (inter-) relationships in a hierarchy of poly- and/or multicultural communication.

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Стаття надійшла до редакції 25.08.2021



“Як без крил птахам бува годі полетіти, так і людям без наук також не зажити”.

Мануїл Козачинський

український педагог, письменник, драматург

