

KEY ADVANTAGES OF MULTICULTURALISM FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

CHAIKA O. I., PhD, Associate Professor, Visiting Researcher
Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences
University of Luxembourg Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg

E-mail: oxana.chaika@yahoo.es

ORCID: 0000-0002-4317-9456

Abstract. *Multiculturalism is a concept that has gained increasing importance in today's globalized world, which is characterized by diversity and a rich cultural exchange. In the field of foreign language teaching and learning (FLT), the incorporation of multiculturalism has become an essential tool to promote a better understanding of cultural differences, foster empathy, and encourage the acquisition of new linguistic skills. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the key advantages of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning and identify optimal ways of effective strategy implementation on bringing multiculturalism into FLT. Firstly, multiculturalism can provide students with a deeper understanding of the cultural background of the language they are learning. By exposing students to different cultures and traditions, they can better comprehend the linguistic nuances and idiomatic expressions that are inherent in a language. This, in turn, can enhance their language proficiency and make them more effective communicators. Secondly, multiculturalism can promote empathy and tolerance towards people from different cultures. In a multicultural classroom, students can learn to appreciate and respect the diversity of cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values. This can improve their intercultural communication skills and promote a more inclusive learning environment. Thirdly, multiculturalism can encourage critical thinking and creativity. When students are exposed to different cultural perspectives, they are challenged to question their own assumptions and biases. This can foster a more open-minded approach to learning and inspire new ideas and ways of thinking. Fourthly, multiculturalism can prepare students for a globalized workforce. In today's interconnected world, cross-cultural competence is a valuable asset for professionals in various fields. By incorporating multiculturalism into foreign language teaching and learning, students can develop the skills necessary to communicate effectively with people from different cultures, both in personal and professional settings. In conclusion, the incorporation of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning offers many advantages, including a deeper understanding of cultural backgrounds, empathy and tolerance towards diversity, critical thinking, and preparation for a globalized workforce. By recognizing the importance of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning, educators can create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment that prepares students for success in a globalized world.*

Key words: *multiculturalism, foreign language teaching, learning, advantages.*

Introduction. Multiculturalism has become an increasingly important concept in foreign language teaching and learning. According to Kramsch (1993) and Chaika et al. (2022), multiculturalism is necessary for the development of intercultural communicative competence, which involves the ability to understand and effectively communicate with people from diverse

cultural backgrounds [14; 5]. Foreign language educators can develop a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment that equips students for success in a globalized world by integrating multiculturalism into language teaching and learning. This aligns with the European Commission's perspective that "multilingualism and intercultural understanding are essential for

personal development, social inclusion and active citizenship" [9, p. 5]. Similarly, the Council of Europe highlights the importance of language education that "fosters respect for diversity and promotes intercultural dialogue" [7, p. 5].

One of the key advantages of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning is its ability to provide students with a deeper understanding of the cultural background of the language they are learning. By exposing students to different cultures and traditions, they can better comprehend the linguistic nuances and idiomatic expressions that are inherent in a language [2; 4]. This, in turn, can enhance their language proficiency and make them more effective communicators.

In addition to enhancing language proficiency, multiculturalism can promote empathy and tolerance towards people from different cultures. In a multicultural classroom, students can learn to appreciate and respect the diversity of cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values [19]. This can improve their intercultural communication skills and promote a more inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, multiculturalism can encourage critical thinking and creativity. When students are exposed to different cultural perspectives, they are challenged to question their own assumptions and biases [14]. This can foster a more open-minded approach to learning and inspire new ideas and ways of thinking.

Finally, multiculturalism can prepare students for a globalized workforce. In today's interconnected world, cross-cultural competence is a valuable asset for professionals in various fields [10]. By incorporating multiculturalism into foreign language teaching and learning, students can develop the skills necessary to communicate effectively with people from different cultures, both in personal and professional settings.

While the benefits of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning have been studied extensively,

there are still some gaps that need to be filled in. For example, there is a need for more research on the most effective ways to incorporate multiculturalism into language teaching and learning [15]. Additionally, more studies are needed to examine the long-term impact of multiculturalism on students' language proficiency and intercultural communication skills [2; 21].

The research problem, therefore, is to investigate the key advantages of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning and to identify effective ways to incorporate multiculturalism into language teaching and learning, with a focus on the long-term impact on students' language proficiency and intercultural communication skills. By addressing this research problem, educators can enhance their understanding of the importance of multiculturalism in language teaching and learning and develop strategies to promote a more inclusive and effective learning environment for students.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. Multiculturalism is known to be a complex and multifaceted concept that has been widely discussed in the field of foreign language teaching (FLT). Scholars from different regions of the world have explored the role of multiculturalism in FLT, and their perspectives and approaches vary based on their cultural and educational backgrounds.

In Ukraine, Ivankova et al. (2019) emphasize that the incorporation of multiculturalism in FLT can help learners develop a deeper understanding of their own culture as well as the cultures of others [12]. They suggest that intercultural communication and cultural awareness are vital components of FLT, and the inclusion of multicultural perspectives can lead to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of different cultures. It is also agreed with Svitlana Amelina, Valentyna Miroshnichenko, and Tetiana Potapchuk, the Ukrainian scholars who have published several articles on

cross-cultural competence, that questions of national identity and self-identity of students in FLT are of critical value in the educational settings [1; 18; 21]. Irkina et al. focus on the role of intercultural competence in FLT where they argue that incorporating multicultural perspectives in FLT can enhance learners' intercultural competence [11]. The scholars also emphasize the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences, and suggests that FLT teachers need to be trained to develop their own intercultural competence in order to effectively teach it to their students. Valentyna Miroshnichenko's research focuses on the impact of national identity in multicultural education [21]. Thus, Miroshnichenko argues that students' national identity can influence their attitudes in life and those towards learning a foreign language. Further, it should be suggested that FLT teachers need to be aware of their students' national identity and find ways to incorporate it into their teaching practices. Next, Tetiana Potapchuk's research focuses on the development of national and cultural identity of students and leads to the questions of self-identification [18]. From this perspective and taking it further, it should be suggested that FLT teachers need to promote cultural and national awareness of students who learn a foreign language and provide opportunities for students to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Potapchuk also argues that developing students' self-identity is an essential part of developing their intercultural competence and at the same time preserving their national character and self-identity, which is well supported in the works of other recognized Ukrainian scholars and pedagogues [17; 20; 22].

In the EU, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2017) emphasize that FLT must be infused with critical multiculturalism to challenge dominant cultural and linguistic norms and promote social justice and equality [1]. They suggest that this

approach can help learners develop intercultural competence by engaging them in critical analysis and reflection on cultural and linguistic diversity. In Asia, scholars approach the role of multiculturalism in FLT from different perspectives. For example, in Japan, Yamamoto (2018) highlights the challenges of teaching English as a global language in a monocultural society [25]. The researcher suggests that incorporating multicultural perspectives in FLT can help learners develop a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of global communication. In China, Wang (2019) suggests that promoting multiculturalism in English language teaching can help learners develop intercultural competence and promote cultural exchange and cooperation with other countries [24]. Similarly, in Malaysia, the government has implemented policies to promote multiculturalism and multilingualism in FLT to enhance learners' intercultural competence [16].

The importance of multiculturalism in FLT is not straightforward and can be viewed in different ways by scholars from various regions. Nevertheless, the inclusion of multiculturalism in FLT can aid learners in acquiring intercultural competence, a critical skill in today's interconnected world. Therefore, it is necessary to examine diverse methods and outlooks regarding the integration of multiculturalism in FLT to enhance learners' intercultural competency.

Methods. Based on the research problem mentioned, this research utilized a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods included administering surveys to foreign language students and teachers at the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine and Kryvyi Rih Pedagogical University in order to gather data on their perceptions of the benefits of multiculturalism in language learning, and

measuring the impact of multiculturalism on students' language proficiency and intercultural communication skills through standardized language proficiency tests [8].

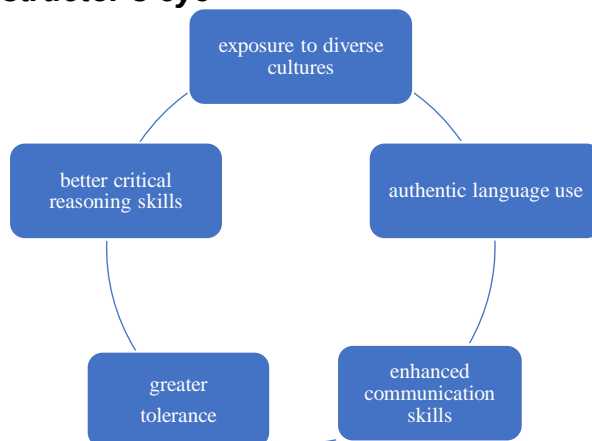
The qualitative methods included conducting interviews with foreign language teachers and students to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences with multiculturalism in language learning, and conducting classroom observations to observe how multiculturalism was being incorporated into foreign language instruction [23].

The data gathered from both the quantitative and qualitative methods were analyzed using statistical analysis and thematic analysis to identify key advantages of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning, and effective ways to incorporate multiculturalism into language teaching and learning [13].

Results. Following the findings obtained in the surveys and interviews at both the universities, it is concluded that multiculturalism offers several key advantages for foreign language teaching and learning, including exposure to diverse cultures, increased motivation, authentic language use, enhanced communication skills, enhanced critical thinking skills, better creativity, and greater tolerance and understanding by the educators (see Fig. 1. *Advantages of Multiculturalism in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: via the FL instructor's eye*) and the students (see Fig. 2. *Advantages of Multiculturalism in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: via the student's eye*).

Advantages of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning as viewed from the perspective of foreign language (FL) instructors mainly highlight that multiculturalism refers to the recognition, appreciation, and incorporation of diverse cultures and identities in the FL classroom. The understanding of these benefits may come to the fact that multiculturalism in FLT enhances cultural awareness and understanding. Incorporating multiculturalism in FL teaching and learning can help students develop a better understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and identities. This can lead to increased tolerance and empathy towards people from different backgrounds, which is essential in today's globalized world. Then, it improves language proficiency; exposure to different cultures and languages can improve students' language proficiency by providing opportunities for authentic language practice and enhancing their communicative competence in a variety of cultural contexts [6]. In addition, it promotes critical thinking and problem-solving as incorporating multiculturalism in FL teaching and learning can challenge students to think critically about different cultural norms, values, and beliefs. This can promote the development of problem-solving and decision-making skills that are essential in intercultural communication [3]. Finally, it provides a dynamic learning environment, as according to Kramsch (1993), incorporating multiculturalism in FL teaching and learning can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that promotes active learning and student engagement [14; 4].

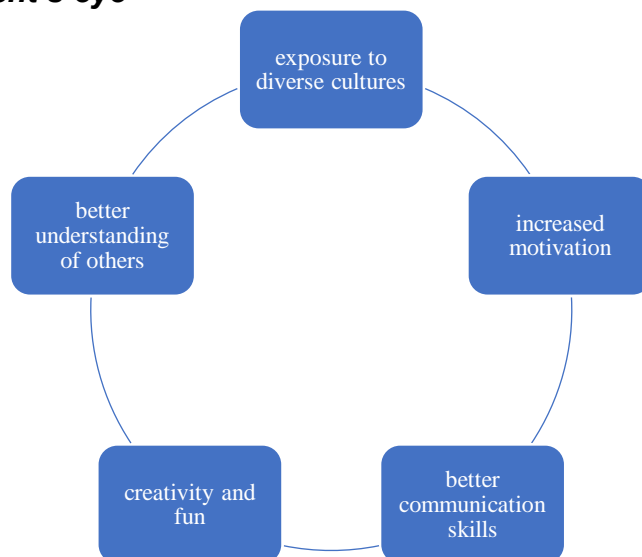
Fig. 1. Advantages of Multiculturalism in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: via the FL instructor's eye



At large, the FL teachers at both the universities find that the advantages of multiculturalism in FL teaching and learning are numerous and varied. By incorporating multiculturalism in their teaching practices, FL instructors can help students develop intercultural competence, enhance their language proficiency, and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Advantages of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning can also be viewed from the perspective of the students. Multiculturalism in the FL classroom can provide students with a range of benefits, such as increased creativity and fun, better communication, and more understanding of different cultures and identities.

Fig. 2. Advantages of Multiculturalism in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: via the student's eye

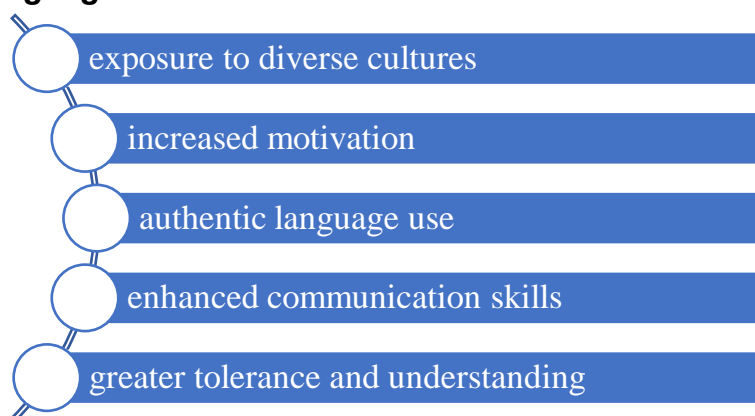


As discussed by the students, incorporating multiculturalism in FL teaching and learning can provide them with opportunities to explore and express their creativity by integrating different cultural perspectives into their learning. This can make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. Next, students believe that such approaches improve communication as they provide them with exposure to different cultural perspectives, norms, and communication styles. This can enhance their ability to communicate effectively with people from diverse national / cultural backgrounds and results in enhanced understanding of different cultures and identities. Therefore, multiculturalism in FL

teaching and learning can help students gain a better understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and identities. This can lead to increased tolerance and empathy towards people from different backgrounds.

In the end, it was decided to see in which parts and scope the ideas of teachers and students on benefits of multiculturalism in FLT are shared and/or overlapping. The findings have embodied into the following list, without any limitations (Fig. 3. *Advantages of Multicultural Education when Learning / Teaching a Foreign Language*).

Fig. 3. Advantages of Multicultural Education when Learning / Teaching a Foreign Language



The advantages of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning are numerous and include as shared in the teachers and students' feedback the following: exposure to diverse cultures, increased motivation, authentic language use, enhanced communication skills, and greater tolerance and understanding.

1. *Exposure to diverse cultures:* Multiculturalism allows foreign language learners to be exposed to different cultures and ways of life. This exposure can broaden their horizons and help them gain a better understanding of the global community.

2. *Increased motivation:* Learners who are interested in other cultures are often highly motivated to learn the language associated with that culture.

This motivation can lead to increased engagement and better learning outcomes.

3. *Authentic language use:* Multiculturalism provides learners with opportunities to use the language they are learning in authentic contexts. By interacting with people from different cultures, learners can practice their language skills and gain confidence in their abilities.

4. *Enhanced communication skills:* Multiculturalism can help learners develop better communication skills by exposing them to different communication styles and cultural norms. This exposure can help learners become more effective communicators in a variety of contexts.

5. *Greater tolerance and understanding*: Multiculturalism can foster greater tolerance and understanding among learners by promoting empathy and respect for people from different cultures. This can help learners become more open-minded and accepting of diversity, which is an important skill in today's globalized world.

Overall, multiculturalism offers many advantages for foreign language teaching, and learning. Multiculturalism provides foreign language learners with the opportunity to interact with people from different cultures, which can broaden their horizons, deepen their understanding of the global community, and increase their motivation to learn the language associated with that culture. Furthermore, exposure to authentic language use can help learners gain confidence in their abilities and develop better communication skills. Finally, multiculturalism can foster greater tolerance and understanding, enabling learners to become more effective communicators in a variety of contexts.

In the end, it is evidenced that incorporating multiculturalism into language teaching and learning is an important aspect of providing a holistic education to students. The study findings take to some effective ways to achieve this goal:

1. *Introduce culturally diverse materials*: Language teachers can incorporate culturally diverse materials into their lessons, including texts, music, films, and artwork. This can expose students to different cultures and provide them with opportunities to understand and appreciate different perspectives.

2. *Incorporate cultural activities*: Teachers can incorporate cultural activities into their lessons, such as cooking traditional dishes, celebrating cultural holidays, or participating in cultural festivals. These activities can provide students with hands-on experiences that help them understand and appreciate different cultures.

3. *Encourage cross-cultural communication*: Teachers can encourage cross-cultural communication by facilitating classroom discussions that involve sharing cultural experiences and perspectives. This can help students develop empathy and understanding for people from different backgrounds.

4. *Use technology*: Technology can be a useful tool for incorporating multiculturalism into language teaching and learning. Teachers can use video conferencing tools to connect with language learners from different countries and facilitate cultural exchanges. They can also use online resources, such as virtual museums, to introduce students to different cultures.

5. *Collaborate with multicultural communities*: Teachers can collaborate with multicultural communities to create meaningful learning experiences for their students. This can involve inviting guest speakers from different cultural backgrounds, participating in community events, or engaging in service learning projects that benefit multicultural communities.

Incorporating multiculturalism into language teaching and learning can be a rewarding experience for both teachers and students. By exposing students to different cultures and perspectives, teachers can help them develop important skills, such as empathy, respect, and intercultural communication.

Discussion. The research problem of investigating the advantages of multiculturalism in foreign language teaching and learning, and identifying effective ways to incorporate it into language education, is of utmost importance in creating an inclusive and effective learning environment. The benefits of multiculturalism in language learning are extensive, including exposure to diverse cultures, increased motivation, authentic language use, enhanced communication skills, and greater tolerance and understanding. By

recognizing and addressing these advantages, language educators can develop a comprehensive understanding of the significance of multiculturalism in language teaching and learning, and design strategies to promote an inclusive and effective learning environment for their students. Thus, it is crucial for language educators to embrace the significance of incorporating multiculturalism into their teaching practices, in order to facilitate the development of intercultural competence among their students, which is vital for thriving in today's globalized world.

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КЛЮЧОВІ ПЕРЕВАГИ ВИХОВАННЯ МУЛЬТИКУЛЬТУРНОСТІ У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИВЧЕННЯ Й НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

Чайка О. І.

Анотація. *Мультикультурність постає як концепція, яка набуває все більшої ваги в сучасному глобалізованому світі. Така концепція у навчанні іноземним мовам здебільшого характеризується своїм різноманіттям й обміном багатим культурним досвідом між студентами / викладачами. У процесі навчання та вивчення іноземних мов виховання мультикультурності стало необхідним інструментом для підвищення рівня розуміння іноземних мов і культурних явищ, сприяння емпатії та пошуку нових мовленнєвих навичок. Метою цієї роботи є визначення ключових переваг виховання мультикультурності в навчанні та вивченні іноземних мов. Результати дослідження демонструють, що виховання мультикультурності під час вивчення й навчання іноземних мов може забезпечити студентам глибше розуміння культурного контексту мови, яку вони вивчають; сприяти підвищенню рівня емпатії та толерантності до людей з різних культур; стимулювати розвиток критичного мис-*

лення та підготовку до роботи в глобалізованому світі. У підсумку важливо зазначити, що з вихованням мультикультурності під час вивчення студентами та навчання іноземних мов викладачами, педагоги можуть створювати більш привабливе (інтерактивне) та інклюзивне навчальне середовище, яке набагато швидше створює умови для підготовки студентів до їхнього подальшого успіху в глобалізованому світі.

Ключові слова: мультикультурність, виховання мультикультурності, вивчення іноземних мов, навчання іноземним мовам, переваги.