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## THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

**Streszczenie.** Artykuł podejmuje analizę roli nauczyciela jako nosiciela dialogu międzykulturowego w warunkach globalizacji, nasilonych migracji oraz przemian systemów edukacyjnych. Ramę teoretyczną stanowią współczesne ujęcia kompetencji międzykulturowej (komponent wiedzy, umiejętności, postaw i krytycznej świadomości kulturowej) oraz perspektywy inter-/multikulturowe. Część empiryczna obejmuje: (1) jakościową analizę treści programów kształcenia nauczycieli w latach 2022-2024 (8 programów z Ukrainy i Polski; schemat kodowania oparty na „Key Competences for Lifelong Learning”, EC 2018; pięć wymiarów), (2) sondaż wśród studentów i nauczycieli (N=82). Stwierdzono, że komponent międzykulturowy najczęściej występuje deklaratorywnie na poziomie celów/efektów uczenia się (ogółem 78%; UA 75%, PL 82%), rzadziej zaś w treściach rozwijających kompetencje (62%; 58%/67%), metodach sprzyjających dialogowi (41%; 38%/45%), kryteriach oceny (29%; 26%/33%) oraz praktykach i współpracy instytucjonalnej (22%; 20%/25%). Wyniki sondażu są zbieżne z tym profilem: wysoka świadomość znaczenia dialogu (87% UA; 91% PL) współwystępuje z niższą samooceną poziomu kompetencji (44%/57%) i wskazaniem na potrzebę dodatkowego przygotowania (72%/68%). Wnioski podkreślają konieczność operacjonalizacji międzykulturowości w kurikulum poprzez ściślejsze powiązanie efektów uczenia się z metodami dydaktycznymi, kryteriami ewaluacji i praktykami, w odniesieniu do europejskich ram kompetencji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** nauczyciel; dialog międzykulturowy; kompetencja międzykulturowa; globalizacja; kurikulum; analiza treści; integracja uczniów-migrantów; multikulturalizm; ewaluacja kompetencji; metody dialogowe.

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**Abstract.** This article analyzes the role of teachers as agents of intercultural dialogue in the context of globalization, intensive migration, and the transformation of education systems. The theoretical framework consists of contemporary approaches to intercultural competence (components of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness) and ideas of inter-/multiculturalism. The empirical basis consists of: (1) content analysis of teacher training programs in 2022–2024 (18 programs in Ukraine and Poland; coding scheme based on “Key Competences for Lifelong Learning,” EC, 2018; five dimensions), (2) a survey of students and teachers (N=82). The results show that the intercultural component is most often presented declaratively at the level of learning objectives/outcomes (78% overall; Ukraine 75%, Poland 82%), and significantly less often in content that develops competencies (62%; 58%/67%), methods that support dialogue (41%; 38%/45%), assessment criteria (29%; 26%/33%), and practices/institutional cooperation (22%; 20%/25%). The survey results are consistent with this profile: high recognition of the importance of dialogue (87% of Ukrainians; 91% of Poles) is combined with a lower self-assessment of competence development (44%/57%) and the need for additional training (72%/68%). The conclusion was made about the need to operationalize interculturalism in the curriculum by clearly linking the declared learning outcomes with teaching methods, assessment criteria, and systemic practices, which confirms the expediency of relying on the European competence framework.

**Keywords:** teacher; intercultural dialogue; intercultural competence; globalization; educational curriculum; content analysis; integration of migrant students; multiculturalism; competence assessment; methods that support dialogue.

## Introduction

Contemporary globalization processes are radically changing social structures, cultural practices, and educational systems. The intensification of migration flows, growing cultural diversity, and the digitization of education are creating new challenges for pedagogical activity. The educational space is no longer just a sphere for the transmission of knowledge and is increasingly becoming an environment for the formation of values, tolerance, and a culture of coexistence (Banks, 2023; Dewey, 1916/2004).

The problem of intercultural dialogue in education is multidimensional and encompasses pedagogical, psychological, and sociocultural aspects. Scientific works emphasize that in a globalized world, educators play the role of cultural mediators, dialogue facilitators, and agents of social change (Byram, 2021; Deardorff, 2020). At the same time, their activities largely depend on their ability to overcome stereotypes, promote empathy, and integrate students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

In recent years, Polish discourse has actively analyzed the problems of migrant integration in schools, which has become particularly relevant after the mass arrival of Ukrainian children (Ćwirynka et al., 2024; Grzymała-

Moszczyńska, 2022). Ukrainian researchers emphasize the need for intercultural dialogue as a means of overcoming the social consequences of war and preserving the identity of students (Vasyutynsky, 2023; Kochubeynik, 2022).

Foreign studies (Byram, 2021; Gorski, 2021; OECD, 2022) show that in a globalized world, educators must combine the functions of teacher, cultural mediator, and dialogue facilitator. Their ability to overcome stereotypes and promote empathy and mutual respect determines whether the educational space will become a platform for mutual understanding and partnership or a field for the reproduction of social divisions.

In addition, researchers emphasize the crisis of teacher authority, which is exacerbated by digitalization and changes in the structure of knowledge (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020; Selwyn, 2022). At the same time, the psychological dimension of the teaching profession is becoming particularly important, as it is precisely this dimension that ensures resilience and the ability to support students in crisis situations (Ungar, 2021).

At the same time, modern schools face a number of serious challenges. These include the crisis of teacher authority, which, in the context of digitalization and the growth of information influence, requires new strategies for professional legitimization (Żeber-Dzikowska, 2024); the contradiction between national identity and global values; and the problem of ensuring a safe and tolerant environment for children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. All these factors highlight the need for a theoretical and practical rethinking of the role of the teacher as a bearer of intercultural dialogue.

Thus, the article focuses on the teacher as a key figure in the process of intercultural communication in the context of globalization. The aim of the work is to define and justify their role as a carrier of intercultural dialogue, and the tasks are to analyze conceptual approaches to the problem, reveal the functions of teachers in a multicultural educational environment, and identify challenges and prospects for the development of educational practices in the context of globalization.

### **Theoretical foundations**

The concept of intercultural dialogue in contemporary humanities is interpreted as a process of communicative interaction between representatives of different cultures, based on the principles of equality, mutual respect, and willingness to cooperate (Byram, 1997; UNESCO, 2020). In pedagogy, it is considered an important condition for the formation of civic competence and the prevention of cultural barriers in the educational environment. Inter-

cultural dialogue is not limited to the exchange of knowledge, but includes the development of critical awareness, the ability to reflect, and the mastery of the values of tolerance (Byram, 2021; Barrett, 2018).

Globalization is a powerful factor in the transformation of the educational space. It leads to an increase in cultural diversity in classrooms, broadens the range of challenges for educators, and at the same time opens up new opportunities for the development of competencies. As Gorski (2021) notes, effective pedagogy in a global context requires a shift from traditional multiculturalism to critical multiculturalism, which includes analyzing social inequality, overcoming discriminatory practices, and building solidarity.

The historical background of multiculturalism in education dates back to the ideas of humanistic pedagogy of the 19th–20th centuries (Ziazun, 2005; Dewey, 1916). In Western European countries, intercultural education became part of school curricula in the second half of the 20th century, when migration processes intensified (Banks, 2023). The Polish experience shows that educational institutions are increasingly working in a multicultural environment, especially in connection with the integration of Ukrainian children (Ćwirynkało et al., 2024; Cholewa, 2024). In Ukraine, the idea of intercultural dialogue became relevant in the context of military and political aggression and large-scale migration, when schools became a space for adaptation and identity support (Vasyutynskyi, 2023; Kochubeinik, 2022).

The concept of competence in pedagogical science is multidimensional and reflects the transition from a knowledge-based paradigm of education to a competence-based one. Unlike the traditional interpretation of education as the transfer of knowledge, the modern concept of competence emphasizes the integration of cognitive, operational, and value-motivational components (Rychen & Salganik, 2003; Hall, 2019). In Polish pedagogical discourse, competence is defined as *zintegrowany system wiedzy, umiejętności i postaw*, which ensures the effective functioning of the individual in society (Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2015). Ukrainian scholars (Ziazun, 2005; Sukhomlinska, 2019) emphasize that competence goes beyond professional qualifications and encompasses the ability for self-development, critical thinking, and creative interaction.

Thus, competence in modern pedagogy is considered an integral characteristic of an individual, including not only knowledge and skills, but also values, attitudes, and readiness for responsible activity.

Intercultural competence is a specific form of competence that ensures effective interaction in a multicultural environment. According to M. Byram (1997), it encompasses the following components:

- knowledge (*savoirs*) – awareness of social groups and cultural practices;

- interpretation and interaction skills (*savoir comprendre, savoir apprendre/faire*) – the ability to understand cultural differences, analyze and interpret cultural phenomena;
- values and attitudes (*savoir être*) – openness, tolerance, respect for otherness;
- critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager*) – the ability to evaluate phenomena from the perspective of democratic and ethical principles.

Polish researchers (Grzymała-Moszczyńska, 2022; Sadowska, 2021) emphasize the need to integrate the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of intercultural competence. In Ukraine, the issue is considered in the context of national-patriotic education and the need to develop future teachers' readiness for intercultural dialogue (Vasyutynskyi, 2023; Dovhan, 2020; Oliinyk, 2015).

Thus, intercultural competence emerges as a holistic structure that includes knowledge about other cultures, practical interaction skills, humanistic values, and attitudes of tolerance, which together form the ability to engage in dialogue.

International experience shows that the formation of intercultural competence is a universal challenge for modern education, but its implementation takes on different emphases depending on the historical and sociocultural context of the country (European Commission, 2018; Deardorff, 2020; MES, 2016).

Contemporary scientific literature distinguishes three conceptual approaches:

- multiculturalism – a focus on the coexistence of cultures without mutual integration;
- interculturalism – an approach that emphasizes interaction and dialogue between cultures, building trust and shared values (Portera, 2020);
- transnational education – a strategy for forming global identity and citizenship that combines local and universal values (OECD, 2022).

The interdisciplinary aspect of the research is also important. Psychological science emphasizes the development of empathy and resilience as the foundations of intercultural competence (Ungar, 2021). Cultural studies emphasize the role of symbolic practices and rituals in shaping a tolerant environment (Hall, 2019). Sociological analysis points to the danger of marginalizing groups if schools do not provide an inclusive approach (Castles et al., 2014). Therefore, intercultural dialogue in pedagogy can only be considered within a broad scientific framework that integrates pedagogical, psychological, cultural studies, and sociological perspectives.

Thus, the theoretical basis of the study allows us to consider the teacher as a key figure who shapes the space of trust and cooperation. They appear not only as a transmitter of knowledge, but also as a cultural mediator capable of overcoming barriers and integrating children into a single learning environment that meets the requirements of the era of globalization.

### **Research methodology**

The methodological basis of the study was an interdisciplinary approach combining pedagogy, psychology, cultural studies, and sociology. Literature analysis, comparative-historical method, content analysis of educational programs and questionnaires for students of pedagogical specialties in Ukraine and Poland were used (Pajak-Ważna, 2013). This approach provides an opportunity for a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of intercultural dialogue in the educational environment, since this issue goes beyond the scope of purely pedagogical science and requires consideration of cognitive, emotional, and social factors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Portera, 2020).

The following methods were used to achieve the set goal:

- analysis of scientific literature on the problem of intercultural communication and education (Byram, 2021; Banks, 2023);
- comparative-historical method to identify common and different trends in the development of intercultural education in Ukraine and Poland;
- content analysis of educational programs, which allowed us to assess the level of integration of intercultural aspects in the training of future teachers (European Commission, 2018);
- questionnaires for students and practicing teachers, which allowed us to obtain empirical data about their perceptions, experiences, and needs.

The study included a qualitative content analysis of teacher training curricula (bachelor's and master's degrees) for the years 2022-2024, covering eight higher education institutions in Ukraine and Poland. The coding scheme was based on the European Commission's Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018), taking into account five dimensions: (1) explicit references to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in learning objectives and outcomes; (2) the presence of content components that develop intercultural competences; (3) a description of teaching methods that promote dialogue (e.g., project work, simulations, intercultural tutoring); (4) forms and criteria for assessing these competences; (5) organization of practices and cooperation with institutions that support integration. Two-stage coding (open and axial) was applied, and discrepancies were resolved by consensus. Compliance with

the competency framework was verified using the European Commission (2018) document.

The study involved 82 respondents: 48 from Ukraine (40 students of pedagogical faculties and 18 teachers) and 34 from Poland (27 students and 7 teachers). This sample ensured representativeness for identifying both the perspectives of future teachers and the practical experience of those already working in a multicultural environment (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The stages of the study included:

1. Theoretical analysis of contemporary sources and definition of the conceptual framework.
2. Development of a questionnaire, testing, and conducting a survey among respondents.
3. Processing and interpretation of results, taking into account globalization and sociocultural contexts.

Particular attention was paid to ensuring the validity and reliability of the tools, which meet current standards for pedagogical and social research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Thus, the chosen methodology made it possible to combine the depth of theoretical analysis with empirical testing of hypotheses, which creates the basis for a comprehensive coverage of the role of the teacher as a carrier of intercultural dialogue in the context of globalization.

## **Results and discussion**

The analysis of the data obtained allows us to assess the level of awareness of the importance of intercultural dialogue, the self-assessment of the intercultural competencies of respondents, identify difficulties, and determine the key functions of the teacher in a multicultural environment.

First of all, it was important to trace the structure of the sample, which included students of pedagogical specialties and practicing teachers from two countries (see Fig. 1). This approach made it possible to combine the perspective of future teachers with practice.

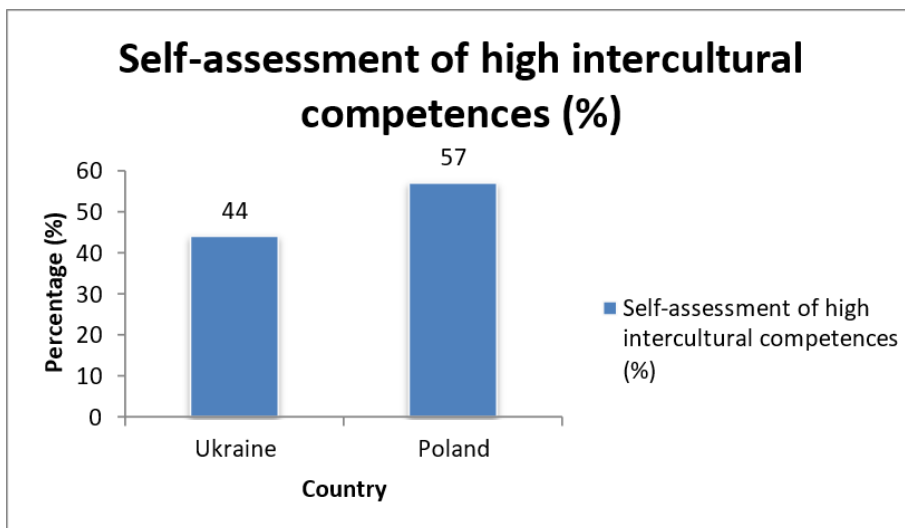
This approach made it possible to combine the perspective of future teachers with the practical experience of those who work directly with students of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The survey results showed a high level of awareness of the importance of intercultural dialogue. In particular, 87% of Ukrainian and 91% of Polish respondents emphasized that fostering a culture of dialogue is one of the key tasks of modern schools. At the same time, only 44% of Ukrainians and 57%

of Poles believe that they have a sufficient level of intercultural competence. This gap between the perceived importance of the issue and the actual possibilities for its practical implementation confirms the findings of international studies (Byram, 2021; Gorski, 2021; Młynek, 2023).

**Table 1. Sample profile ( $N=82$ )**

Country	Status	N
Ukraine	Students	40
Ukraine	Teachers	8
Poland	Students	27
Poland	Teachers	7



**Figure 1. Self-assessment of a high level of intercultural competence (%)**

Further analysis revealed a significant need for additional professional training in the field of intercultural communication. The need for specialized courses and training was reported by 72% of Ukrainian and 68% of Polish survey participants. The majority also noted the difficulties of integrating



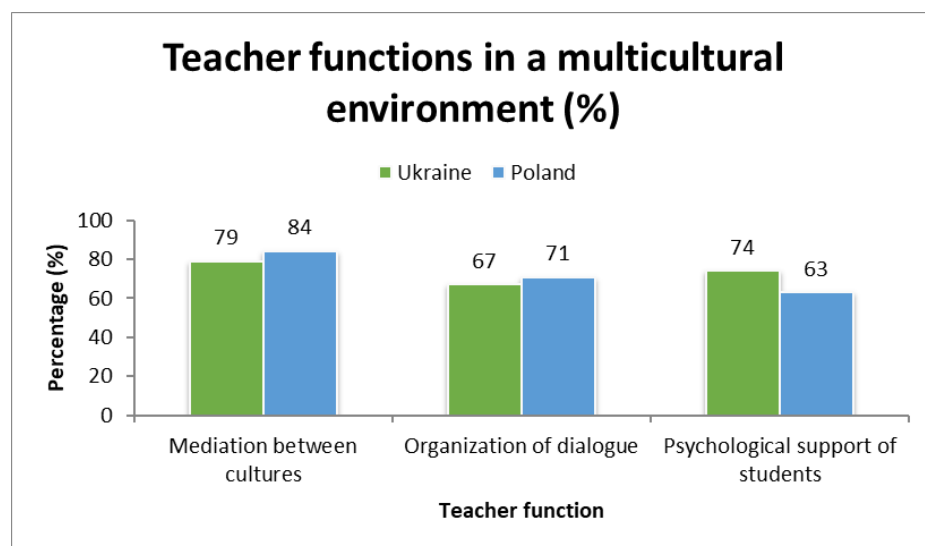
migrant students into the educational process (63% and 59%, respectively). These data are consistent with the findings of Polish researchers, who emphasize the lack of institutional support for teachers in multicultural classrooms (Ćwirynkało et al., 2024; Cholewa, 2024; Potapchuk, 2022).

**Table 2. Main survey results (%)**

Indicator	Ukraine (%)	Poland (%)
Awareness of the importance of dialogue	87	91
Self-assessment of high competence level	44	57
Need for additional training	72	68
Difficulties in integrating migrant students	63	59

Regarding respondents' perceptions of the role of the teacher, the main functions were identified as:

- mediation between cultures (79% of Ukrainians; 84% of Poles);
- organization of dialogue (67% and 71%, respectively);
- psychological support for students (74% and 63%).



**Figure 2 Teachers' perceptions of their role in a multicultural environment (%)**

These results show that teachers understand their work as much more than simply imparting knowledge: they position themselves as cultural mediators and facilitators of dialogue. Similar emphases can be found in contemporary international documents, which stress the importance of fostering a culture of peace and tolerance in the educational environment (OECD, 2022; Deardorff, 2020; Sobkowiak, 2021; Wojciech, 2024).

A comparison of Ukrainian and Polish experiences revealed a number of common trends:

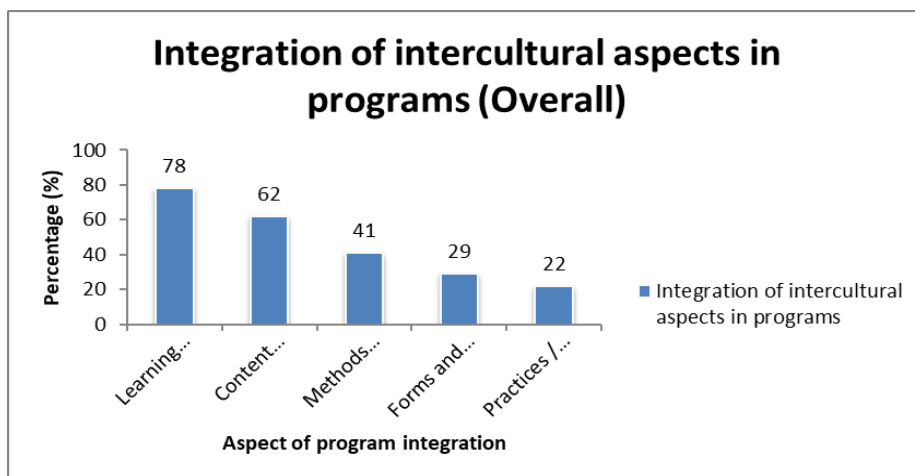
- in both countries, teachers are perceived as central figures in shaping a culture of tolerance;
- interactive methods are actively used to promote intercultural dialogue;
- there is still a problem of insufficient training of future teachers to work with migrant children.

At the same time, a comparative analysis of Ukrainian and Polish experiences reveals certain differences in emphasis: Ukrainian respondents more often highlight psychological support as a key task, which is due to the war context and the need to overcome traumatic experiences. Polish respondents, on the other hand, more often emphasize the organization of dialogue, which reflects the need to regulate cultural contacts in the environment of mass integration of Ukrainian children.

Thus, the results of the study confirm that teachers in a globalized society perform not only educational, but also cultural-mediating and social-protective functions. The quality of the educational space and the level of integration of children into a multicultural society depend on their readiness for intercultural interaction. In addition, the thesis that the role of the teacher as a bearer of intercultural dialogue is universal in nature, but its specific implementation depends on the socio-historical context (Banks, 2023; Portera, 2020; Gozdawa-Gołębiowski, 2024) is confirmed.

Results of content analysis of educational programs. Content analysis of teacher training programs showed that the intercultural component is most often represented at the declarative level of learning objectives and outcomes (in 78% of programs overall; Ukraine – 75%, Poland – 82%). It is much less frequently operationalized in the form of described content components aimed at developing intercultural competencies (62%; Ukraine – 58%, Poland – 67%), as well as teaching methods that promote dialogue (41%; Ukraine – 38%, Poland – 45%). The greatest deficit concerns explicit forms and criteria for assessing these competences (29%; Ukraine – 26%, Poland – 33%) and practices and institutional cooperation aimed at their development (22%; Ukraine – 20%, Poland – 25%). The outlined profile confirms the discrepancy between high awareness of the importance of intercultural dialogue and its

practical implementation in the curriculum and is consistent with the survey results (high awareness with a simultaneous declared need for additional training). The summary of indicators and five dimensions of operationalization is presented in Figure X. The results reinforce the relevance of referring to the European Competence Framework (European Commission, 2018) and point to the need for closer alignment between stated outcomes and teaching methods, assessment criteria, and practices.



**Figure 3. Overall level of integration of intercultural aspects in curricula across five dimensions: presence in learning objectives/outcomes, content components of competencies, methods that support dialogue, approaches to assessing competencies, and practices and institutional cooperation.**

This profile corresponds to the survey results: high awareness of the importance of dialogue coexists with a sense of insufficient practical training and integration difficulties, as indicated by respondents. The results confirm the relevance of referring to the European Competence Framework (European Commission, 2018) and the need to link learning outcomes more closely to teaching methods and the assessment of intercultural competences.

### Challenges and prospects

In light of the content analysis, the key challenge remains the transition from a declarative interpretation of interculturalism to its operationalization: designing classes with dialogue methods, clearly defined assessment criteria, as well as systemic practices and institutional partnerships. An analysis

of contemporary educational practices in the context of globalization shows that the role of the teacher as a bearer of intercultural dialogue faces a number of challenges that are complex in nature and require multidimensional consideration.

First, there is a crisis of authority for teachers in the context of digitalisation and intensive technological development. Students have access to alternative sources of knowledge, which reduces the teacher's monopoly as a bearer of information (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). This changes their role from that of an “expert” to a facilitator capable of organizing critical dialogue, developing information verification skills, and shaping media literacy (Selwyn, 2022).

Second, globalization intensifies tensions between local identity and universal values, creating the risk of polarization in school communities. This is particularly noticeable in countries experiencing large-scale social or military crises. In Ukraine, the challenges of war and forced migration highlight the need for psychological support, overcoming traumatic experiences, and building an atmosphere of trust in schools (Ungar, 2021; Vasyutynsky, 2023).

Third, the institutional readiness of education systems to integrate migrant students remains an important issue. The Polish experience shows that the lack of adequate support for teachers in multicultural classrooms leads to their overload and role uncertainty (Ćwirynka et al., 2024). This creates the risk of superficial adaptation without deep inclusion of children in the educational and social environment (see Table 2).

Global trends also include:

- international mobility of students and teachers, which opens up new opportunities for academic exchanges (European Commission, 2018);
- the growing role of inclusive education as an environment for the integration of different cultures (OECD, 2022);
- increased security challenges in schools related to xenophobia, discrimination, and cultural conflicts (see Fig. 2).

These trends open up new opportunities, but at the same time challenge educators to adapt their methods to the global context without losing their national identity and cultural specificity.

For Ukraine, the mass migration processes caused by the war have become particularly important. According to international organizations, millions of Ukrainian children are integrating into the school systems of EU countries, in particular Poland, which requires teachers to adopt new approaches to teaching and education. In such a situation, the teacher becomes a mediator between the traumatic experiences of children and the new sociocultural environment. This requires skills in intercultural communication, psychological support, and the ability to work in conditions of social tension. For Polish

teachers, this is a challenge of integrating a large number of Ukrainian students, while for Ukrainian teachers, it is a task of maintaining educational continuity in extraordinary circumstances.

The response to these challenges is to seek strategies that can improve the effectiveness of intercultural education, which can be outlined in several areas. First, there is the systematic improvement of teachers' qualifications in the field of intercultural education, which should become a mandatory element of training and postgraduate education. Second, an important task is the development of international academic exchange programs that promote the formation of global identity and practical experience of intercultural interaction (Byram, 2021). Third, the integration of psychological and social support into educational programs is promising, which is especially relevant for societies in crisis (Ungar, 2021).

Of particular importance is the formation of teachers as agents of change, capable of combining national and cultural traditions with global values, creating conditions for dialogue and partnership, and developing solidarity among young people. Thus, contemporary challenges—the crisis of teacher authority, global trends in education, and war—simultaneously become prospects for development. They stimulate the search for new forms of pedagogical activity that integrate intercultural competence, humanistic values, and a focus on safety in education.

In summary, it can be argued that pedagogical activity in a globalized world is becoming not only a profession but also a social mission. The quality of cultural integration and the stability of the educational environment depend on the teacher's readiness to respond to challenges, which is directly related to the tasks of public safety and social cohesion (Banks, 2023; Portera, 2020).

## Conclusions

The study confirmed that teachers in a globalized society are key figures in intercultural dialogue, integrating educational, social, and psychological dimensions. Thus, a theoretical analysis of contemporary concepts of intercultural dialogue (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2020; OECD, 2022) showed that the intercultural competence of teachers is formed as an integrative quality that includes knowledge of other cultures, interaction skills, critical cultural awareness, and readiness for tolerant coexistence. It ensures the ability of teachers to act as mediators between cultures and to create a space for cooperation in the educational environment.

A gap was identified between program declarations and the practical implementation of methods and assessment of intercultural competencies; it was

recommended to link learning outcomes to teaching methods, assessment criteria, and practices in accordance with the European Commission framework (2018).

The survey results showed a high level of awareness among respondents of the importance of intercultural dialogue (87% of Ukrainians and 91% of Poles), but at the same time, an insufficient level of competence development (44% and 57%, respectively). This disproportion indicates a gap between theoretical attitudes and practical readiness, which coincides with the findings of recent studies on the complexity of transforming pedagogical roles in a global context (Byram, 2021; Gorski, 2021).

The scientific novelty of the work lies in the interdisciplinary justification of the role of the teacher as a bearer of intercultural dialogue. The teacher is seen not only as a professional who transmits knowledge, but also as a cultural mediator, a facilitator of trust, and an agent of social change. This approach integrates pedagogical, psychological, cultural, and sociological perspectives, which allows us to overcome reductionist interpretations of competencies and consider them in a broader value and social dimension (Portera, 2020; Ungar, 2021).

The practical significance of the results obtained lies in the identification of specific educational policy objectives:

- systematic introduction of intercultural education courses and training into the preparation of future teachers;
- institutional support for teachers working in multicultural classrooms, in particular through advisory centers and professional development programs;
- expanding international academic exchanges that will contribute to the formation of a global identity among students and teachers;
- integrating psychological support and mediation practices into the school environment to overcome traumatic experiences and prevent conflicts.

In summary, it can be said that teachers are not only bearers of knowledge, but also of the values of coexistence. Their readiness for intercultural dialogue determines whether the school will become a space of solidarity and trust or remain merely an institution of formal education (Portera, 2020; Oliinyk, 2015; Ziaziun, 2005). Further research should focus on developing innovative models for building intercultural competencies, evaluating the effectiveness of international education programs, and integrating security issues into intercultural education discourse.

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