



## Terminological differentiation of the concepts “intercultural”, “polycultural”, “multicultural”, and “cross-cultural” in the context of forming cross-cultural competence

Olena Turitsyna\*

Assistant

National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine

03041, 15 Heroiv Oborony Str., Kyiv, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7775-9750>

**Abstract.** The relevance of this research was determined by the growing influence of globalisation processes that increasingly affect all spheres of social life. The modern world is characterised by intensive migration flows and the expansion of international cooperation in education, economics, politics, and culture, which necessitate effective interaction among representatives of different cultures and value systems. In this context, the ability to establish constructive communication, to understand cultural codes, and to avoid intercultural barriers had become an essential component of the professional competence of contemporary specialists. The purpose of this article was to provide a detailed terminological distinction between the concepts intercultural, polycultural, multicultural, and cross-cultural in the context of forming cross-cultural competence, and to reveal the interrelations and specific features in scholarly discourse. The study employed methods of theoretical analysis of academic literature, comparative analysis of key terms, generalisation, systematisation, and interpretation of research findings. The results demonstrated that, despite certain semantic similarities, each term carried its own conceptual meaning and highlighted different aspects of cultural interaction. Specifically, multicultural communication emphasised the coexistence and diversity of cultures within a single society; intercultural communication focused on dialogue, mutual understanding, and tolerance between representatives of different cultural groups; cross-cultural communication concerned the active interaction between individuals from significantly different cultural systems, addressing differences and overcoming barriers; whereas polycultural communication reflected the idea of harmonious cultural interpenetration while preserving each culture’s unique identity. The findings of the research can be applied to design effective educational

---

Received 11.10.2025 Revised 01.02.2026 Accepted 26.02.2026 Published 19.03.2026

---

### **Suggested Citation:**

Turitsyna, O. (2026). Terminological differentiation of the concepts “intercultural”, “polycultural”, “multicultural”, and “cross-cultural” in the context of forming cross-cultural competence. *Humanities Studios: Pedagogy, Psychology, Philosophy*, 14(1), 40-51. doi: 10.31548/hspedagog/1.2026.40.

\*Corresponding author



Copyright © The Author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

programmes and training courses aimed at developing cross-cultural competence among future professionals in the field of international relations

**Keywords:** terminology; communication; cultural interaction; globalisation; cultural differences; social integration

---

## Introduction

In the modern era of globalisation, when intercultural interaction is becoming increasingly intensive and multidimensional, the need to clearly define the concepts describing different forms of cultural communication has become particularly urgent. The academic discourse often employs the terms intercultural, multicultural, polycultural, and cross-cultural as synonyms, which blurs the conceptual boundaries and leads to inconsistencies in theoretical interpretation and methodological application. This ambiguity hampers the development of coherent frameworks for understanding and forming cross-cultural competence. Therefore, establishing clear and consistent terminology is a necessary step towards ensuring the accuracy and depth of scientific reflection on cultural interaction processes.

In contemporary academic discourse, increasing attention has been devoted to the problem of terminological differentiation among the concepts “intercultural”, “multicultural”, “polycultural”, and “cross-cultural”. The relevance of this issue lies in the need to establish precise theoretical foundations for developing effective models of cross-cultural competence formation in the context of globalisation. Within the field of communication studies, the distinction between “intercultural” and “cross-cultural” communication is often blurred; however, these notions convey markedly different meanings in scientific research. Specifically, “cross-cultural” studies focus on comparing two or more cultures based on certain features or characteristics, whereas “intercultural” studies explore direct interaction between representatives of distinct cultures.

The term “cross-cultural” demonstrated that, at the level of communication oriented towards

mutual understanding, alignment of linguistic codes, and reconciliation of participants’ perspectives, the notions “cross-cultural” and “intercultural” may overlap or even be considered synonymous. Nevertheless, terminological sources reveal important distinctions in how these concepts are defined. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), “cross-cultural communication” refers to the exchange of information between individuals from different cultural backgrounds, emphasising the analysis of cultural differences and the identification of potential barriers. In contrast, “intercultural communication” is primarily concerned with fostering dialogue, mutual understanding, and the prevention of miscommunication. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) similarly defines “cross-cultural interaction” as engagement across differing cultural norms, values, and behaviours, requiring heightened awareness of how such factors influence the transmission and perception of meaning.

The latest studies confirm that these conceptual distinctions remain relevant for modern globalised contexts. M. Wilczewski & I. Alon (2023) reveal through bibliometric analysis that communication competence in culturally diverse environments increasingly depends on precise terminological usage and awareness of cultural frameworks that shape interaction. Similarly, M. Nadeem & A. Zabrodskaja (2023) propose a comprehensive model of intercultural communication for international students in multicultural societies, emphasising the dialogical dimension of understanding across cultures. W. Baker (2024) also highlights the ethical and relational aspects of intercultural communication in educational settings, arguing that intercultural interaction entails negotiation of linguistic and cultural

resources rather than mere exchange of information. Taken together, these definitions and findings highlight that cross-cultural communication entails not only recognising differences but also managing these differences effectively to ensure successful information exchange. Intercultural communication, by contrast, emphasises the relational and ethical dimensions of interaction, prioritising empathy, respect, and adaptability in encounters with cultural diversity. Understanding these nuances is crucial for constructing comprehensive models of cross-cultural competence, as it enables educators, professionals, and researchers to distinguish between analytical approaches focused on cultural contrasts and dialogical approaches that promote genuine interpersonal understanding.

M. Valenzuela & A. Bernardo (2023) expand this perspective, viewing polyculturalism as a dynamic process of connection and mutual influence among cultural groups rather than a static coexistence of multiple cultures. In addition, A. Tkachuk (2023) explores communication strategies for fostering intercultural understanding and overcoming stereotypes, an area that remains underdeveloped in many competence-formation models. The analysis of the latest studies thus reveals significant variability in how these key terms are interpreted, underscoring the importance of the clear terminological differentiation for advancing the scientific understanding of cross-cultural competence formation. Despite numerous publications on the topic, the problem of distinguishing “intercultural”, “multicultural”, “polycultural”, and “cross-cultural” concepts remains insufficiently resolved. Few scholars propose unified approaches to the differentiation, and the processes of mutual cultural influence within cross-cultural communication are still underexplored. Furthermore, practical models of cross-cultural competence formation for contemporary polycultural environments remain limited. Existing research seldom accounts for the dynamic nature of cultural evolution and the continual transformation of intercultural interactions. The

challenge of overcoming cultural stereotypes in communication also demands deeper theoretical and empirical investigation, as does the development of new pedagogical strategies aimed at cultivating mutual respect among representatives of diverse cultures.

Therefore, the problem of terminological clarification and the practical application of cross-cultural communication remains both relevant and promising for further scholarly exploration. The present article seeks to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the conceptual and terminological framework related to cultural interaction in the context of globalisation. Specifically, it aims to differentiate the meanings of the terms “intercultural”, “multicultural”, “polycultural”, and “cross-cultural” as used in contemporary academic literature, emphasising the nuances that distinguish these closely related concepts. Additionally, the study focuses on identifying the distinctive features of cross-cultural communication within a polycultural environment and determining how it differs from intercultural and multicultural forms of interaction. Particular attention is devoted to analysing the mutual influence of cultures in the process of cross-cultural communication and its crucial role in overcoming stereotypes, biases, and communication barriers.

The article aimed to justify the use of the term “cross-cultural communication” as the most accurate and relevant concept for academic research and for developing cross-cultural competence in modern education and professional practice.

## Materials and Methods

The methodological framework of this research was based on an integrated and comparative approach to the analysis of scientific literature addressing the issues of cultural interaction, communication, and competence formation. The study was carried out between 2022 and 2024, encompassing several stages of theoretical exploration, data systematisation, and conceptual synthesis. At the first stage, a terminological analysis was

performed to identify and clarify the meanings of the key concepts intercultural, multicultural, polycultural, and cross-cultural. For this purpose, academic publications, monographs, dissertations, and educational resources were examined in order to trace the evolution of each term and the nuances of its application across different scholarly traditions. This step aimed to detect conceptual overlaps and contradictions that contribute to the existing ambiguity in terminology. The second stage involved the use of the comparative method, which made it possible to juxtapose definitions and interpretations of the selected terms across linguistic, sociocultural, and pedagogical contexts. The comparison was carried out according to several parameters: historical background, theoretical focus, scope of application, and relevance to educational practice. This procedure ensured a balanced and systematic evaluation of each concept within both Ukrainian and international frameworks. At the third stage, content analysis was applied to a corpus of scientific and methodological texts, including peer-reviewed journal articles, doctoral theses, and teaching manuals. The analysis focused on identifying dominant themes, theoretical approaches, and models related to the development of cultural competence. The selected materials were coded according to recurring categories: communication strategies, cultural barriers, competence formation, and pedagogical implications, which facilitated the discovery of underlying patterns and conceptual interconnections.

To deepen the interpretation of the findings, a system-structural approach was used. This method allowed the researcher to determine the internal relationships among different forms of cultural communication and to conceptualise the integrative role in enhancing mutual understanding and tolerance among representatives of diverse cultural backgrounds. The interpretative and generalisation methods were then employed to synthesise the results of the theoretical analysis and to substantiate the choice of the

term cross-cultural communication as the most precise and comprehensive descriptor of cultural interaction in the modern globalised environment. The validity and reliability of the research results were ensured through triangulation of methods, consistency of theoretical sources, and verification of interpretations by comparing multiple independent studies. Moreover, conclusions were cross-checked against empirical evidence presented in the previous pedagogical and sociolinguistic research, which strengthened the credibility of the conceptual distinctions drawn in this study. Overall, the chosen methodological strategy provided a solid and reliable foundation for achieving the research objectives and for formulating well-grounded conclusions about the nature and classification of cultural communication in contemporary academic discourse.

## Results and Discussion

Cross-cultural communication is primarily oriented towards the comparative analysis of cultural characteristics and views the communication process as one that may be complicated by the presence of cultural barriers. In contrast, intercultural communication focuses on the development of strategies aimed at optimising interaction between representatives of different cultures and addressing misunderstandings that emerge due to cultural differences. F. Batsevych (2007) defines cross-cultural communication in two complementary ways: first, as a synonym for intercultural communication, and second, as a distinct concept that refers to the comparative study of specific phenomena across two or more cultures, emphasising the similarities and differences.

In foreign academic discourse, scholars tend to draw clear distinctions between intercultural, cross-cultural, and multicultural (or polycultural) communication. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), multicultural communication involves interaction among representatives of different cultural backgrounds, with an emphasis on mutual understanding, preservation of cultural identity, and avoidance of assimilation process-

es. This form of communication promotes social integration through the exploration of diverse languages, customs, and traditions, viewing cultural diversity as a valuable resource for human development and harmonious coexistence.

The conducted analysis makes it possible to distinguish fundamental differences among multicultural, intercultural, and cross-cultural communication. Multicultural communication refers to interaction among individuals representing diverse cultural environments and underscores the significance of acknowledging cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity. It emphasises coexistence and recognition of plurality without necessarily implying deep mutual interaction. In contrast, intercultural communication focuses on interaction between cultures that exhibit moderate differences, emphasising the achievement of mutual understanding and effective dialogue. It presupposes not only tolerance, but also the willingness to engage in adaptive and empathetic communication that bridges cultural distinctions. G. Chen & W. Starosta (2005), when defining cross-cultural communication, however, highlight interaction between individuals belonging to cultures characterised by profound social, ethical, and value-based differences, where successful communication requires overcoming deep-rooted barriers to understanding. The latest research provides new insights into these distinctions. For instance, M. Nadeem & A. Zabrodska (2023) propose a comprehensive model of intercultural communication that integrates intercultural effectiveness, competence, adjustment, and adaptation as dynamic phases in the communicative process. The findings confirm that intercultural and cross-cultural communication are not static phenomena, but developmental processes requiring continuous reflection and adaptation. Similarly, C. Sousa *et al.* (2019) emphasise that intercultural competence is deeply connected to cultural intelligence (CQ), particularly behavioural and metacognitive dimensions, which significantly influence individuals' ability to communicate effectively across diverse contexts.

In the educational domain, O. Chaika (2024) highlights that higher education institutions increasingly employ pedagogical strategies such as reflective dialogue, role-play, and culture-based learning to promote intercultural understanding and reduce communication anxiety among international students. These studies confirm that effective intercultural communication requires both linguistic proficiency and the creation of supportive, dialogic environments that encourage cultural adaptation. Meanwhile, scholars examining cross-cultural communication in digital and media contexts point to new complexities emerging in online interaction. F. Paquenseguy & Q. Guo (2025) observe that digital platforms like Douyin (TikTok) have become sites of mediated cross-cultural dialogue, where meaning is negotiated through "cultural symbols, emotional narratives, and social practices". This perspective broadens the understanding of cross-cultural communication beyond face-to-face exchanges, illustrating how global digital interconnectedness reshapes intercultural relationships. Furthermore, M. Huang (2024) notes that digital media professionals increasingly confront the need for cross-cultural literacy to prevent misunderstandings and promote responsible global communication. Finally, cross-cultural communication has significant socio-economic implications. A study by Q. Chen *et al.* (2023) demonstrates that the intensity of cultural communication and exchange significantly contributes to the growth of the visitor economy and international cooperation, highlighting that effective communication across cultural boundaries supports sustainable development goals.

Thus, while multicultural communication stresses diversity and coexistence, intercultural communication promotes understanding and adaptation, and cross-cultural communication seeks to bridge substantial cultural divides and foster meaningful interaction between culturally distant groups. In the context of a globalised and digitally interconnected world, cross-cultural communication assumes particular significance,

as it enables effective cooperation, cultivates mutual respect, and contributes to the development of sustainable intercultural relations despite profound cultural contrasts (Table 1, Table 2).

**Table 1.** Differences between intercultural and multicultural communication

Intercultural communication	Multicultural communication
Involves direct interaction between representatives of different cultures.	Involves the study and observation of interactions among diverse cultures.
Aims at achieving mutual understanding and promoting cultural exchange.	Focuses on recognising and respecting various cultural identities.
Requires adaptation of communication styles to different cultural contexts.	Emphasises inclusiveness and equality among different cultural groups.
Plays an essential role in international relations, diplomacy, and global business.	It is particularly relevant for societies and communities composed of culturally diverse members.

**Source:** compiled by the author based on *Global arena* (n.d.)

**Table 2.** Differences between intercultural and cross-cultural communication

Intercultural communication	Cross-cultural communication
Involves direct interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds.	Refers to the coexistence and comparison of multiple cultures within one environment or across contexts.
Focuses on analysing and interpreting cultural differences and the impact on communication.	Focuses on analysing and interpreting cultural differences and the impact on communication.
Represents a theoretical and research-based approach to understanding cultural interaction.	Represents a theoretical and research-based approach to understanding cultural interaction.
It is essential for academic research and the development of effective cross-cultural strategies.	It is essential for academic research and the development of effective cross-cultural strategies.

**Source:** compiled by the author based on *Global arena* (n.d.)

These distinctions demonstrate that while intercultural communication emphasises interaction and mutual adaptation, multicultural communication focuses on diversity and inclusion, and cross-cultural communication prioritises comparative analysis and understanding of cultural differences. Together, these approaches form an integrated framework for studying communication in a globalised and multicultural world. It is also essential to emphasise that, although the terms “multicultural”, “polycultural”, and “pluricultural” are often used interchangeably in academic and public discourse, a few researchers point out that these terms reflect distinct conceptual frameworks and have different implications for intercultural interaction. The key divergence lies in the nature and depth of the relationships between cultural groups. Multiculturalism, in its classical sense, denotes the coexistence of various ethnic, racial, or religious communities within a single society,

yet without significant integration or intensive cross-cultural exchange. As noted by I. Kovalynska (2016), communication among members of different ethnic groups under this model tends to remain limited and superficial; in educational contexts, teaching and learning frequently occur in relatively segregated environments, where acquaintance with other cultures is confined to general or introductory exposure. This model, while recognising diversity, may unintentionally reinforce social distance and contribute to cultural isolation, hindering genuine social cohesion.

Polyculturalism, on the other hand, promotes a fundamentally different vision of intercultural coexistence. It emphasises active interaction, mutual learning, and the exchange of experiences among representatives of diverse cultures. Within this framework, mixed learning groups become a natural space for dialogue and shared development, where the enrichment of cultural

perspectives serves as a foundation for building social unity and empathy. From a contemporary standpoint, multiculturalism focuses primarily on studying and celebrating cultural differences and highlighting the contribution of each group to the broader mosaic of social life. In contrast, polyculturalism is grounded in the idea that cultures are not isolated entities but are constantly interconnected through communication, adaptation, and reciprocal influence. This approach, according to L. Rosenthal & S. Levy (2010), not only fosters respect and understanding but also creates favourable conditions for the development of positive intergroup relations. By shifting attention from separation to interdependence, polyculturalism underlines the shared dimensions of human experience, presenting cultures as complementary rather than competing systems. It allows individuals to maintain the unique cultural identity without pressure to assimilate into a dominant culture, while simultaneously encouraging openness, collaboration, and the formation of a common cultural space based on equality and mutual respect.

It is essential to recognise that culture is not a static construct, but a dynamic and ever-evolving phenomenon shaped through continuous interaction and exchange with other cultures. This perspective makes it possible to view culture as an open system capable of transformation, adaptation, and renewal under the influence of global processes and intercultural contact. Such an understanding plays a crucial role in overcoming psychological barriers and reducing cultural stereotyping. It encourages the emergence of an inclusive, dialogical society in which diversity is not perceived as a source of division but as a foundation for mutual enrichment. In this kind of environment, the contribution of each cultural group to the shared heritage of human civilisation is acknowledged and valued. At the same time, the preservation and conscious cultivation of one's own cultural identity remain vital prerequisites for achieving harmonious coexistence within a polycultural world.

When analysing the concepts, it becomes evident that the term "cross-cultural communication" most accurately reflects the essence of intercultural interaction in modern scholarly discourse. In academic literature, for instance by V. Horlach (2020), this phenomenon is interpreted as a multifaceted process of interaction between representatives of different cultural communities, characterised by the diversity of communicative styles, strategies, and behavioural patterns. Cross-cultural communication requires an adequate understanding of the interlocutor, considering variations in symbolic systems, cognitive stereotypes, and cultural norms, factors that have gained particular importance in the context of globalisation and increasing cultural interdependence.

Moreover, cross-cultural communication is often interpreted as a complex process of exchange that unfolds within a polycultural environment, where participants represent different linguistic and cultural communities and engage in continuous interaction aimed at mutual understanding and cooperation. As N. Borysko (2018) observes, such communication goes beyond the simple transmission of information, it involves the development of intercultural awareness, tolerance, and the ability to interpret meaning through the prism of another culture's worldview. In the educational sphere, this process plays a crucial role in preparing future professionals, particularly foreign language teachers, to function effectively in a multicultural and multilingual world. According to the author, effective cross-cultural communication requires not only linguistic competence but also the formation of a broader intercultural outlook that enables individuals to recognise and respect the diversity of cultural norms, communicative styles, and behavioural expectations. Within this framework, communication becomes both an educational and transformative experience: participants learn to overcome ethnocentric attitudes, reinterpret cultural assumptions, and establish constructive dialogue with representatives of other linguistic

and cultural communities. Thus, cross-cultural interaction serves as a dynamic mechanism of personal and professional development, fostering empathy, reflective thinking, and openness to the richness of global cultural diversity. In this context, communication unfolds within diverse value systems and behavioural codes, enabling reciprocal influence and mutual adaptation among cultures. Such interaction fosters the development of communicative flexibility and intercultural sensitivity, leading to more effective dialogue. The contact between linguistic and cultural groups thus assumes a bilateral character: it involves a dynamic exchange of values, linguistic norms, and social practices that gradually reshape the participants' worldview. Through this ongoing intercultural dialogue, rigid stereotypes are replaced by more nuanced, multidimensional perceptions of the Other, better reflecting the real complexity of cultural diversity. This transformative process enhances participants' communicative competence, encouraging the refinement of speech strategies and greater awareness of cultural context. As a result, cross-cultural interaction not only eliminates prejudices but also promotes deeper mutual understanding, empathy, and tolerance – qualities that constitute the foundation of meaningful communication and the effective exchange of ideas in a globalised world (Solodka, 2016).

Cross-cultural competence constitutes a fundamental component of professional activity in the context of globalisation and international cooperation. It encompasses the development of the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with representatives of other cultural backgrounds, taking into consideration the value systems, social norms, behavioural conventions, and communicative styles. As M. Byram (1997) emphasised, cross-cultural competence integrates not only linguistic and pragmatic skills but also the capacity for critical cultural awareness, the ability to interpret and relate cultural meanings in intercultural encounters.

According to W. Gudykunst *et al.* (1997), effective intercultural communication requires

understanding both the cognitive and affective dimensions of human interaction. The anxiety/uncertainty management theory explains that competence involves reducing uncertainty about cultural others and managing one's emotional reactions to difference. Hence, developing such competence implies not only knowledge about other cultures but also the flexibility, empathy, and openness necessary to adapt communication strategies in diverse contexts (Chirkov, 2024). From a complementary perspective, G. Hofstede *et al.* (2010) argue that cross-cultural competence entails awareness of how deep-seated cultural dimensions, such as power distance, individualism versus collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance, influence perception and behaviour in professional and social communication. The ability to identify, analyse, and overcome cultural barriers therefore becomes a distinctive feature of cross-cultural competence. In this sense, cross-cultural competence is not limited to the accumulation of factual knowledge about other cultures; rather, it represents a dynamic combination of cognitive understanding, communicative adaptability, and reflective sensitivity that enables individuals to build constructive relationships across cultural boundaries. Such competence is essential for fostering mutual respect, collaboration, and successful interaction in a rapidly globalising world.

Contemporary models of cross-cultural competence development describe this process as a gradual progression through several interrelated stages, from initial awareness of cultural differences to adaptation and eventual integration of new communicative strategies. At the first stage, individuals become conscious of the existence and significance of cultural diversity, recognising that the norms and values represent only one possible worldview among many. As J. Banks (2016) emphasises, this awareness forms the foundation for culturally responsive education and professional practice, helping individuals move beyond ethnocentric perspectives towards a more pluralistic and inclusive

understanding of human interaction. The next stage involves adaptation, during which individuals learn to modify the communicative behaviour and attitudes to interact effectively in multicultural environments. J. Berry's (1997) model of acculturation provides an important theoretical framework for this phase, suggesting that successful intercultural adaptation requires a balance between maintaining one's cultural identity and engaging with new cultural systems. Through this process, individuals develop cognitive flexibility and emotional resilience that allow functioning appropriately across diverse cultural settings. The final stage, integration, is characterised by the internalisation of intercultural sensitivity and the habitual use of flexible communication strategies. Many international corporations and organisations implement structured cross-cultural training programmes to enhance these abilities among the employees. Such programmes focus not only on the acquisition of cultural knowledge but also on the cultivation of empathy, tolerance, and openness to cultural diversity as essential professional competencies. As a result, cross-cultural competence becomes a dynamic process of personal and professional growth that fosters mutual understanding, collaborative efficiency, and innovation in global contexts.

A polycultural environment stimulates the emergence of new forms and models of interaction grounded in mutual respect, cooperation, and creative synergy. Such an environment encourages individuals to transcend cultural boundaries and engage in dialogue that values diversity as a source of enrichment rather than division. The comparative analysis of related concepts reveals that the term "cross-cultural" most comprehensively captures the specificity and complexity of contemporary intercultural processes. Unlike "multicultural" or "polycultural", which primarily describe coexistence or mutual influence among different cultural groups, the concept of "cross-cultural" emphasises the dynamic process of interaction, negotiation, and the constructive overcoming of cultural differences in shared activities.

In this sense, cross-cultural competence becomes not only a desirable professional skill but also a crucial dimension of human interaction in an interconnected world. It reflects the ability to communicate effectively and ethically across cultural boundaries, to interpret diverse cultural meanings, and to transform potential misunderstandings into opportunities for cooperation and innovation. The development of such competence fosters intercultural understanding, enhances teamwork, and strengthens the foundations of social cohesion in a globalised context. Thus, cultivating cross-cultural competence can be viewed as one of the key determinants of successful communication, professional adaptability, and sustainable collaboration in the modern international environment.

## Conclusions

The results of the present study indicate that the concepts of "intercultural", "multicultural", "polycultural", and "cross-cultural" exhibit significant semantic distinctions that must be carefully considered in both academic research and practical application. Intercultural communication emphasises dialogue and mutual understanding between cultures; multiculturalism focuses on the coexistence of different cultural communities; polyculturalism highlights the mutual influence and interpenetration of cultures; and cross-cultural communication centres on the active overcoming of barriers between culturally distinct groups. Clear terminological differentiation among these concepts enhances the development of effective models for cultivating cross-cultural competence. The conducted analysis revealed both the theoretical interconnectedness and the practical distinctions among these concepts within contemporary academic and professional discourse. It demonstrated that while all four terms relate to diverse forms of cultural interaction, only "cross-cultural communication" fully encompasses both the comparative and adaptive dimensions essential for the effective development of cross-cultural competence.

In the contemporary context of globalisation, the notion of cross-cultural communication most accurately reflects the realities of interaction among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The development of cross-cultural competence has emerged as an essential prerequisite for successful professional activity within multicultural and polycultural environments, enabling individuals to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity, adaptability, and ethical awareness. Promising directions for further research include the design and implementation of practical tools and training programmes aimed at fostering cross-cultural competence in various domains, including education, international

business, and diplomacy. By integrating theoretical insights with applied strategies, such initiatives can contribute to the formation of professionals capable of effective, respectful, and innovative intercultural engagement in an increasingly interconnected world.

### Acknowledgements

None.

### Funding

None.

### Conflict of Interest

None.

### References

- [1] Baker, W. (2024). Intercultural communication. *ELT Journal*, 78(2), 212-215. doi: [10.1093/elt/ccad040](https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccad040).
- [2] Banks, J.A. (2016). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- [3] Batsevych, F.S. (2007). *Dictionary of terms in intercultural communication*. Kyiv: Dovira.
- [4] Berry, J.W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, 46(1), 5-34. doi: [10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x).
- [5] Borysko, N.F. (2018). *Problems of intercultural training of future teachers and instructors of foreign languages*. *Scientific and Methodological Journal "Foreign Languages"*, 1(93), 9-20.
- [6] Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- [7] Cambridge dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>.
- [8] Chaika, O. (2024). Intercultural communication in multicultural education: Strategies, challenges, and opportunities. *International Journal of Philology*, 28(1), 116-123. doi: [10.31548/philolog15\(1\).2024.012](https://doi.org/10.31548/philolog15(1).2024.012).
- [9] Chen, G.-M., & Starosta, W.J. (2005). *Foundations of intercultural communication*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- [10] Chen, Q., Mao, Y., & Morrison, A.M. (2023). Study on the influence of cultural communication on the development of the visitor economy. *Sustainability*, 15(3), article number 1842. doi: [10.3390/su15031842](https://doi.org/10.3390/su15031842).
- [11] Chirkov, V. (2024). Statistical positivism, psychoanalysis, and the theory of sociocultural models: A review of three approaches to acculturation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 101, article number 102009. doi: [10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102009).
- [12] Global arena. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://globalarena.com/difference-multicultural-cross-cultural-intercultural-communication>.
- [13] Gudykunst, W.B., Kim, Y.Y., & Gudykunst, W. (1997). *Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [14] Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

- [15] Horlach, V.V. (2020). *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication: Correlation of concepts*. (Doctoral dissertation, Zaporizhzhia National University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine).
- [16] Huang, M. (2024). Cross-cultural communication in the digital era: Insights from social media interactions. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 54(1), 23-29. doi: [10.54254/2753-7048/54/20241566](https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/54/20241566).
- [17] Kovalynska, I. (2016). *The concepts of "poly-culturalism" and "multiculturalism" in scholarly discourse*. *Educological Discourse*, 1(13), 65-78.
- [18] Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com>.
- [19] Nadeem, M.U., & Zabrodskaia, A. (2023). A comprehensive model of intercultural communication for international students living in culturally diverse societies: Evidence from China. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8, article number 1332001. doi: [10.3389/fcomm.2023.1332001](https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1332001).
- [20] Paquienseguy, F., & Guo, Q. (2025). Douyin and the digital spread of intangible cultural heritage: Transforming cultural dissemination in the short videos age. *Emerging Media*, 3(2), 343-366. doi: [10.1177/27523543251344976](https://doi.org/10.1177/27523543251344976).
- [21] Rosenthal, L., & Levy, S.R. (2010). The colorblind, multicultural, and polycultural ideological approaches to improving intergroup attitudes and relations. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 4(1), 215-246. doi: [10.1111/j.1751-2409.2010.01022.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-2409.2010.01022.x).
- [22] Solodka, A.K. (2016). *Theoretical-methodological principles of cross-cultural interaction of participants in the pedagogical process of higher educational institutions*. (Doctoral dissertation, Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University, Kyiv, Ukraine).
- [23] Sousa, C., Goncalves, G., & Santos, J. (2019). Intercultural contact as a predictor of cultural intelligence. *Universitas Psychologica*, 18(2), 1-12. doi: [10.11144/Javeriana.upsy18-2.icpc](https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.upsy18-2.icpc).
- [24] Tkachuk, A. (2023). Communication strategies for effective intercultural understanding in the context of cultural diversity. *Theoretical and Methodical Problems of Children and Youth Education*, 27(2), 212-223. doi: [10.32405/2308-3778-2023-27-2-212-223](https://doi.org/10.32405/2308-3778-2023-27-2-212-223).
- [25] Valenzuela, M.A., & Bernardo, A.B.I. (2023). The potential of fostering connections: Insights into polycultural organizations. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 16(3), 378-397. doi: [10.1017/iop.2023.23](https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2023.23).
- [26] Wilczewski, M., & Alon, I. (2023). Language and communication in international students' adaptation: A bibliometric and content analysis review. *Higher Education*, 85, 1235-1256. doi: [10.1007/s10734-022-00888-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00888-8).

## **Термінологічне розмежування понять «міжкультурний», «полікультурний», «мультикультурний» і «крос-культурний» у контексті формування крос-культурної компетентності**

**Олена Туріцина**

Асистент

Національний університет біоресурсів і природокористування України

03041, вул. Героїв Оборони, 15, м. Київ, Україна

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7775-9750>

**Анотація.** Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням глобалізаційних процесів, що з кожним роком набувають усе більшого впливу на всі сфери суспільного життя. Сучасний світ характеризується інтенсивними міграційними потоками, міжнародною співпрацею у сфері освіти, економіки, політики та культури, що зумовлює необхідність ефективної взаємодії між представниками різних культур і систем цінностей. У цих умовах уміння налагоджувати конструктивну комунікацію, розуміти культурні коди та уникати міжкультурних бар'єрів стає важливою складовою професійної компетентності сучасного фахівця. Метою статті було детальне термінологічне розмежування понять «міжкультурний», «полікультурний», «мультикультурний» і «крос-культурний» у контексті формування крос-культурної компетентності, а також виявлення їхнього взаємозв'язку та специфіки застосування в науковому дискурсі. У дослідженні використано методи теоретичного аналізу наукової літератури, порівняльного аналізу ключових термінів, узагальнення, систематизації та інтерпретації наукових джерел. Результати аналізу засвідчили, що, попри певну синонімічність, кожне з понять мало власне змістове наповнення та відображало різні аспекти культурної взаємодії. Зокрема, мультикультурна комунікація акцентувала на співіснуванні й різноманітності культур у межах одного соціуму; міжкультурна комунікація підкреслила важливість діалогу, взаєморозуміння та толерантності між представниками різних культурних груп; крос-культурна комунікація фокусувалась на активній взаємодії між носіями істотно відмінних культурних систем, що передбачило аналіз відмінностей і подолання бар'єрів; натомість полікультурна комунікація втілила ідею гармонійного взаємопроникнення культур при збереженні національної ідентичності кожної з них. Практична цінність роботи полягає в тому, що її результати можуть бути використані для розроблення ефективних освітніх програм і тренінгів, спрямованих на формування крос-культурної компетентності майбутніх фахівців міжнародного профілю

**Ключові слова:** термінологія; комунікація; культурна взаємодія; глобалізація; культурні відмінності; соціальна інтеграція