

Anna Nizegorodcew, Yakiv Bystrov, and Marcin Kleban, eds. *Developing Intercultural Competence Through English: Focus on Ukrainian and Polish Cultures*. Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2011. 152 pp. \$35.00, paper.

This collection is a result of a research project by two English Departments: the Jagiellonian University (JU) in Cracow, Poland, and Vasyl' Stefanyk Precarpathian National University in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. The goal is to use English, a globally recognized European *lingua franca*, as a platform for intercultural communication between Ukraine and Poland. Taking into account the target audience of the book (i.e., teachers and students of English), and given its scholarly level, the ambition of the editors with regard to the role of English goes beyond the idea of a *lingua franca*. For the intellectual communities of the two neighbouring countries (tightly bound by history and recent political events, as well as by the kinship of their national languages), the function of English as common cultural ground may be comparable to the function of Latin in the Middle Ages. The goal of this pioneering and praiseworthy editorial enterprise seems to be to establish English as the common ground for a new European and, perhaps, even more global, intercultural partnership.

The authors range from established scholars to MA students, a spectrum also reflected in the structure of the collection. The former dominate in the first, theoretical part, and the latter are represented in the second, practical section. The first part clarifies and expands on the book's title. Yakiv Bystrov and Anastasiia Iermolenko focus on theories of intercultural communication and the practical methods and approaches of studying it. Judging from the structure of the practical part (based on several methods briefly explained by Bystrov and Iermolenko), the editors use the "emic" approach, which presupposes "studying different cultures from the inside, in order to understand cultures as the members of those cultures understand them" (19). The preponderance of this method finds confirmation in the second chapter, where Anna Nizegorodcew explores the relationship between language and culture, zeroing in on English in the multicultural communities of our globalized world and concluding that one of its most important functions is to provide an opportunity to present one's own national culture to other English-language users. In the next chapter Ewa Bandura focuses on the key concept of the whole collection, "intercultural competence." She ascertains that knowledge of foreign languages not only gives insight into other cultures but also creates a space for cross-cultural comparisons and, moreover, contributes to the socio-cultural awareness of one's own country. In the final chapter of the

theoretical part, Marcin Kleban explains how the advantages of English can be augmented by computer technology, which overcomes the limitations of time and space in sharing resources and ideas but “hinges upon the provision of appropriate technical and institutional conditions” (67).

Kleban provides theoretical background to the practical use of information and communication technology (ICT), implemented in the Polish-Ukrainian ICT project that includes an ICT-mediated seminar. Four chapters from the practical part of the volume (“Projects in Polish Culture”) present some of the results. Written by Jagiellonian University MA students, each of the four essays is supplemented by questions from Ukrainian students, with answers provided by Polish and international students. Problems relating to etiquette, religion, morality, and race are raised and receive strong, dialogically structured interpretation, responsive to the challenges of today’s world. Thematically, this part offers short sociological studies with a focus on Polish Catholicism and its attitudes toward other religions (Roy Jones, a JU student from Ireland); Polish attitudes toward Jews (Agnieszka Krzykowska); Polish standards of politeness (a team research project by JU students Ewa Bieta, Katarzyna Biegaj, and Marta Pająk); and the question of academic integrity at Polish universities (a team project by Canadian student Sarah Stinnisen, American student Alaxandra Balant, and Polish students Natalia Mól and Justyna Kula).

Similar sociological studies, conducted by instructors at the Precarpathian National University, comprise the Ukrainian section. Topics include “Cultural Stereotypes and Lifestyle” (Lesia Ikaliuk and Anastasiia Iermolenko); “Tourism and Migration in Ukraine” (Oksana Petryna and Tetiana Skibits'ka); and “A Glimpse of the Latest Developments in Social Life” (Nataliia Telehina and Ella Mintsys). Of these, Ikaliuk’s and Iermolenko’s sketch of gender stereotypes in contemporary Ukrainian society and of student experiences, rites, and traditions looks especially fresh. It is informative and entertaining in its uncompromising attempt to diagnose some subliminal remnants of the Soviet era in present-day Ukraine. Tetiana Pan'kova and Iryna Pavliuk touch upon some traditional folkloric subjects, such as the Ukrainian wedding, Ivan Kupala celebrations, and folk arts. Ol'ha Kul'chyts'ka and Yakiv Bystrov are authors of the most postmodern chapter, “Interpreting Fiction,” which deals with Iurii Andrukhovych’s *Perverziia* [Perversion, 1996]. The latter epitomizes the eclectic nature of the whole volume, its fresh, unconventional, and lively character, which will appeal to serious scholars, students and anyone interested in Ukrainian and Polish cultures.

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