Intercultural and intracultural Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract

The current practice within the Bosnian-Herzegovinian educational system indicates inconsistencies in implementing intercultural and intracultural educational practices. They are not even differentiated but rather equated. However, for the preservation of all the values that Bosnia and Herzegovina embodies, it is necessary to preserve the unique Bosnian-Herzegovinian habitus, composed of all cultural traditions (Bosniak, Croatian, Serbian, Jewish, Roma, and others), and this can only be achieved through intracultural education. What needs to be done within the educational system is the introduction of the subject of course "Intracultural education" in primary and secondary schools and the implementation of intracultural policies through the ministries of education at the state, entity, and cantonal levels, as well as intracultural education across all segments of society. This paper highlights the differences between intercultural and intracultural education and provides guidelines on how to implement the necessary intracultural education policy. As a paradigm, some positive practices within Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture and literature are presented, which can serve as a good foundation for further action.

Keywords: Bosnian-Herzegovinian educational system, intercultural education, intracultural education, cultural traditions

1. INTRADUCTION: Intracultural habitus of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its complex state structure composed of three ethnic and national communities, requires a special approach to education. Theoretically, there is a common core that is promoted through public television services, educational programs, and cultural events that ensure equal participation of all ethnic groups. However, in practice, some communities exhibit rejection, a form of abjection (Kristeva), towards anything with a common origin. These rejections are sometimes conscious, and other times they result from terminological and methodological ignorance. As a result, the term intercultural education is

often used in the educational context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, without realizing that the term intracultural education should be used within the country.

The identity of Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture requires examination through the lens of societal and historical changes, as well as cultural-theoretical trends. For this reason, it is essential to understand the diachronic process of forming national cultural traditions and their contemporary context in order to shape a unique habitus enriched by the multicultural Bosnian-Herzegovinian identity. Esad Delibašić, in his book "Between Ethnos and Demos," emphasizes the existence of mutual tolerance among Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnic communities, but the war interrupted this tradition and prevented its positive influence: "During the war, the attitude towards the other radicalized" (2008: 186), attributing negative labels to others, portraying them as something different, foreign, and dangerous. Delibašić states: "Developing and cultivating tolerance towards others is a crucial precondition for the transformation of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society towards a democratic one" (Delibašić 2008: 187). The principles introduced by Delibašić as a prerequisite for good cultural practices include an adequate educational system that must promote the principles of tolerance, dialogue, and reconciliation, rather than the principles of difference, hatred, and intolerance.

This paper provides definitions of intercultural and intracultural education, and based on these definitions, it offers recommendations for the necessary use of intracultural education wherever possible. The central part of the paper presents an example of how such education can be applied to cultural and literary interactions, along with conclusions and recommendations on how to apply this concept to other educational areas.

2. The necessity of distinguishing between intercultural and intracultural education

Before delving into the ways in which the substrata of Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture have fused, let's first illuminate the origins of the term "intracultural" and differentiate it from "intercultural". The prefixes "inter-" and "intra-" are commonly employed in the English language. While sounding similar, when paired with other words, they give rise to terms that are markedly distinct from each other. These prefixes cannot be interchangeably used. Care must be exercised when employing "inter" and "intra", as they have the potential to alter the entire connotation of a word. The prefix "intra-" conveys "within" or "inside". When utilized as a prefix, it signifies "within a group" (Džafić 2023). Additionally, numerous medical terms also incorporate the prefix "intra-", such as intravenous, intracranial, etc. In scientific discourse, the distinction between species and their relationships is delineated as "intraspecies" or "interspecies". For instance, an "intraspecies" relationship pertains to interactions among

members of the same species, whereas "interspecies" refers to interactions across distinct species. By analogy, for interactions within a particular culture, we can aptly employ the term "intra" for intracultural, or "inter" for intercultural.

Such an approach to Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture would resolve many difficulties in understanding individual identities and the overall cultural identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It would reveal how deeply the mergers of individual ethnic cultures go back into the past (see more in Hadžizukić 2016, Spahić 2016), as well as interactions within different segments that oppose wrong practices and ideologies (Džafić 2015, Pobrić 2016, Lujanović 2022). From this arises the importance of distinguishing between intracultural and intercultural education, especially for Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, which has interactions both outside and within its own society.

The emergence of a novel, globalized cultural milieu, stemming from pervasive global influences, necessitates localization to facilitate novel cultural identifications. In this vein, the identification process becomes increasingly individualized, diverse, and dynamic. Amidst these processes, it is imperative that "old identities (ethnic, national) are not entirely discarded and forgotten, as the global cultural space defines, or at the very least influences, the temporal framework within which old values and practices undergo change, adaptation, or dissolution" (Borovac-Pečarević 2014: 29). Conversely, all pre-existing (cultural, ethnic, national) identities must recognize their incorporation within certain micro and macro identities, acknowledging that interactions are both inevitable and virtually indispensable.

2.1. Intercultural education – definitions and aspects

Intercultural education involves an approach to education that seeks to develop respect and effective mutual interaction among people from different cultural backgrounds. The key determinant of intercultural education is recognizing cultural diversity as a resource for learning and individual, as well as collective, development.

Most definitions of intercultural education consider the distinguishing determinant of different cultural backgrounds as crucial. For instance, Christine E. Sleeter (1996: 192) highlights that "Intercultural education aims to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to participate in cross-cultural interactions. It seeks to promote understanding and respect for cultural diversity, preparing students to engage in a globalized world." In her view, intercultural education serves for a higher level of interaction with other countries on a global scale. Carl Grant shares this perspective, advocating for the inclusion and integration of cultural diversity in curricula with the goal of "equipping students with the ability to interact

effectively with people from different cultures" (Grant 2001: 79). Similarly, James Banks also sees intercultural education as "teaching students to understand, appreciate, and work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds" (Banks 2009: 65). According to him, such education encompasses knowledge about cultural differences and the development of skills for effective communication with the Other, the different, and the diverse.

Based on the macrosystem of cultural development (see more: Alić 2018: 105), the key aspects of intercultural education include: a) cultural awareness, which involves encouraging students to recognize their own cultural identities and understand the identities of others, including exploring cultural traditions, values, and perspectives to foster self-awareness and appreciation of diversity; b) mutual respect, which entails promoting respect for cultural differences and combating heterostereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination; c) effective communication, which involves developing the ability to communicate and interact across cultures, including learning different languages and being sensitive to different cultures and societies; d) critical thinking to encourage students to critically examine cultural prejudices through understanding the complexity of cultural interactions; e) processes of globalization, through which students would be informed and encouraged to be active participants in the globalized world, including awareness of global issues; f) inclusive curriculum integrating diverse cultural perspectives through history, languages, and culture; (see more in Džafić 2015).

The identity of Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture requires examination through the lens of societal and historical changes, as well as cultural-theoretical trends. For this reason, it is essential to understand the diachronic process of forming national cultural traditions and their contemporary context in order to shape a unique habitus enriched by the multicultural Bosnian-Herzegovinian identity. Esad Delibašić, in his book "Between Ethnos and Demos," emphasizes the existence of mutual tolerance among Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnic communities, but the war interrupted this tradition and prevented its positive influence: "During the war, the attitude towards the other radicalized" (186), attributing negative labels to others, portraying them as something different, foreign, and dangerous. Delibašić states: "Developing and cultivating tolerance towards others is a crucial precondition for the transformation of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society towards a democratic one" (Delibašić 2008: 187). The principles introduced by Delibašić as a prerequisite for good cultural practices include an adequate educational system that must promote the principles of tolerance, dialogue, and reconciliation, rather than the principles of difference, hatred, and intolerance.

What is crucial regarding intercultural education, as Aleksandra Đurić Bosnić observes, is that the common denominator of the term interculturalism points to the definition of concepts such as intercultural understanding, intercultural encounters, intercultural circumstances, processes, states, opportunities for interweaving, influences, and recognition, as well as the practice of cultural contacts free from misunderstandings and conflict. In this context, "cultures are not seen as closed entities, but as systems of open possibilities that are built on mutuality and are prone to movement and change" (Đurić Bosnić 2016: 260). The author views the prefix "inter" as an indicator of the encounter and coexistence of cultures as varieties, which always involve self-knowledge and the understanding of otherness. Highlighting the detrimental effects of cultural isolation, Aleksandra Đurić Bosnić emphasizes the importance of openness and intercultural education to prepare individual cultures for the interconnectedness brought by the features of globalization.

2.2. Intracultural education – definitions and aspects

Unlike intercultural education, which involves interaction with other countries and cultures on a global level, intracultural education aims to help individuals within a single cultural group better understand, appreciate, and maintain their own cultural heritage while simultaneously recognizing and respecting diversity within that same group. In this context, Bruna Scapini provides a definition: "Intracultural education involves deepening the understanding of one's own culture, recognizing the internal diversity within it, and promoting a sense of identity and belonging. It focuses on the transmission of cultural knowledge, values, and practices within the same cultural group." (Scapini 2015: 84). Similar thinking is echoed by Marie-Claire Foblets, who emphasizes the importance of "internal cultural cohesion and the continuity of cultural practices and values across generations." (Foblets 2008: 123). Particularly relevant to Bosnian-Herzegovinian society is the definition provided by Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2002), who advocates for the nurturing of subcultures within a single country/state: "Intracultural education refers to fostering a deeper awareness and appreciation of the diverse subcultures within a single cultural context. It seeks to educate individuals about the complexities and variations within their own culture, promoting unity and understanding within the cultural group." (Eriksen 2002: 54).

Such education, acquired within the mesosystem (Alić 2018: 105), encompasses the contents of the system of internal order, which includes numerous events, social, spiritual, and

religious values, including "customs, rituals, and determining membership in social and cultural groups" (Alić 2018: 106).

This type of education, aimed at deepening the understanding of culture and cultures within the same country/state, involves the following aspects: a) Recognition of internal diversity, including different subcultures, regional variations, and diverse social groups; b) Promotion of identity and belonging, as understanding and valorizing culture within one's own country/state helps individuals develop a stronger sense of connection and unity; c) Transmission of cultural knowledge and values, meaning that intracultural education involves passing on cultural knowledge, values, and practices from one generation to another, which helps preserve cultural heritage and ensures that key aspects of culture are not lost; d) Internal cultural cohesion, emphasizing the importance of internal cultural cohesion, i.e., maintaining unity and connection within the state system, including nurturing different but also shared values, especially practices that strengthen the sense of community; e) Educational curricula and practices, which imply that intracultural education can be implemented through educational curricula and practices that reflect the cultural specificities of a particular group, including the integration of local history, language, arts, and other cultural elements into the educational program; f) Interaction of cultural and literary associations, cultural workers, and writers, as well as the application and appreciation of the thinking of writers who propagate the practice of respecting diversity within a single cultural habitat (Džafić 2023: 236). Essentially, intracultural communication implies an awareness of unity in diversity. This means there is an overarching identity within which the variations of that culture communicate successfully and harmoniously.

3. Example of intracultural education through Bosnian-Herzegovinian literature

The introduction of intracultural education as a specific curriculum and subject in schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina would open up numerous possibilities for a deeper understanding and promotion of cultural diversity within the country. However, in addition to the official subject in schools, it is necessary to integrate other aspects and methods to propagate intracultural education and spread its ideas in the name of a more diverse and richer social fabric of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as a better quality of coexistence and way of life.

These educational approaches would lead to the recognition of internal diversity, as Bosnia and Herzegovina is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country with a rich cultural heritage. Intracultural education would enable the recognition of different subcultures, regional variations, and social groups within the country. In this way, it would also promote identity

and belonging, as understanding and valuing the cultural aspects within Bosnia and Herzegovina strengthen the sense of belonging and identity among individuals and groups. This can contribute to building a stronger sense of shared belonging and solidarity within society.

From a practical aspect, intracultural education would enable more transparent transmission of cultural knowledge and values. It would facilitate the transfer of cultural knowledge, values, and practices from one generation to another, which is crucial for preserving the country's cultural heritage and ensuring that key aspects of culture are not lost over time. All of this would contribute to internal cultural cohesion, emphasizing the importance of maintaining internal cultural cohesion within Bosnia and Herzegovina. This includes nurturing both diverse and shared values and promoting practices that strengthen the sense of community within society.

3.1. Examples of intracultural practices

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country where culture is almost synonymous with the arts, so politics strives to focus on performing and visual arts, literature, festivals, and cultural events. Therefore, the concept of culture in the overall Bosnian-Herzegovinian habitus is of crucial importance because cultural issues (however broadly understood) are often linked to questions of religion, nationality, and every other identity. In these contexts, it is not only about the different meanings of the concept of culture but also about different levels that highlight the scope of the term "culture," which under such circumstances should be understood as dynamic, open, constantly changing, and never fully completed processes of mutual interweaving (Pečarević 2014: 19).

Consequently, culture depends on political support, and politics significantly shapes cultural processes. In such circumstances, ministries of culture determine budgets and often operate without a concrete plan, while the synergy of more structured investments is largely determined by cultural societies and non-governmental organizations that direct cultural policy with their project ideas. Besides project activities, ministries also focus on infrastructural segments, investing material (and conceptual) resources in historical buildings, monuments, galleries, as well as in recognized artists. Therefore, it is important for the synergy to be directed towards preserving cultural memory, but also towards exploiting it in the form of new creative cultural values that would present these values, find ways to promote them, and enable contemporary interactions. In recent years, it has been noticeable that ministries have redirected funds towards financing cultural events, magazines, and book publishing. Considering their

capabilities and jurisdictions, ministries can take steps to introduce a subject called Intercultural Education in primary and secondary schools. This subject would, through its curriculum, work on promoting and studying all those values that are the foundation and resource of the unique, supranational Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture.

However, there are examples of good practice. A good example is the book by Irfan Hošić "The image of the crisis. Cultural and artistic opportunities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1990-2020)" in which the author simultaneously presents data from the difficult past and crises in culture, but on the other hand gives excellent examples when intracultural practices are the cause of all crises played a significant role in preserving the compositeness of Bosnian culture. Hošić's book offers excellent examples of the challenges within the Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural scene, particularly those manifested in issues related to institutional functioning spanning from legislative to executive realms. These challenges create a fertile ground for social practice and civic engagement. Through a cross-section of significant events and citizen actions, the author showcases instances where citizens have vehemently opposed one-dimensional views of culture and secured spaces that indicate the potential for intracultural interaction within the Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural sphere.

3.2. Examples of intracultural practices through literature

Bosnian and Herzegovinian literature, as an integral body of work that unifies various literary traditions, can serve as a significant foundation for intracultural education. Due to its rich diversity, the literature of Bosnia and Herzegovina encompasses multilayered dimensions and reflects internal processes that are markedly different from external ones. It shapes an intracultural identity that demands a flexible, diverse, and comprehensive yet unique approach to its study. By relying on the general methodology of literary research and the history of studying Bosnian and Herzegovinian literature, and employing the methodological framework of eclecticism in cultural studies and intercultural literature, it is possible to analyse Bosnian and Herzegovinian literature through its intracultural processes.

Although many scholarly studies on literature still focus on traditional issues of literary history, research work in institutes and the teaching of literature are mostly directed towards the study of literature over time, and the interest of "entire scientific departments generally includes questions related to the development of national literatures" (Solar 2004, 199). Accordingly, recent research shows that literature as an art implies and requires a much more constructive and agile approach. Methodological shifts in the study of literature are becoming more apparent, and already productive analyses and scholarly studies are emerging that support

this view (See more in Bajramović 2010, Hadžizukić 2015, Raljević 2022, Džafić 2023).

Previous approaches to the methodology of studying (the history of) Bosnian-Herzegovinian literature reflect the dynamic nature of its development, characterized by the formation, differentiation, and definition of its components. Unfortunately, over time, as highlighted by many theorists such as Enes Duraković and Vedad Spahić, the identity features of certain components have often been completely neglected (Duraković, 2009; Spahić, 2017). Therefore, an intracultural approach to literature would enable a comprehensive view of all segments of Bosnian-Herzegovinian literature.

The intracultural approach to studying literature requires a thorough understanding of the historical and geographical context in which literary traditions emerged, including ethnic, religious, ideological, and other cultural specificities. At the same time, it is important to consider how these specificities influenced the shaping of the unique profile of Bosnian-Herzegovinian literature and how they have reflected in such a way that today we have extremes: from the complete denial of common foundations to their possessive appropriation. As changes in social conditions and political processes that emphasized the significance of certain ethnic groups accompanied the development of Bosnian-Herzegovinian literature, often resulting in interruptions in its continuity, the correction of such practices is increasingly necessary. Certain good practices show that it is indeed possible to implement changes and that the quickest way is through the model of intracultural education.

How important is literature both as a link between different cultures and as a construct of identity, because "nations as imaginary constructions depend on the mechanisms of cultural fictions (meaning production) within which literature plays a very significant role" (Lujanović 2018: 229). It is for this reason that Lujanović believes that literature is a space with which we can fight for different forms of identification than those imposed. It is a space that offers interaction and a model of good intracultural communication.

In literary practice, examples encompass various segments and activities, from individual efforts of writers (such as Irfan Horozović, Darko Cvijetić, Almin Kaplan, Faruk Šehić, Izet Perviz, Arman Fatić, Senka Marić, Ferida Duraković, Amila Kahrović-Posavljak, Jagoda Iličić, Dubravko Lovrenović, Jospi Mlakić, Šime Ešić and many others), to literary associations like the Literary Cooperative (Književna zadruga). The establishment of the Literary Cooperative (Književna zadruga) by authors of different ethnic groups serves as an indication of the presence of a unified culture and intracultural exchange transcending ethnic and national divisions. All these examples can serve as inspiration for practicing intracultural

education, emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity and dialogue within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4. Conclusion

Intracultural education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is crucial for preserving and promoting the cultural identities of its various ethnic groups. Despite the challenges posed by ethnic divisions and historical tensions, ongoing efforts to enhance understanding and appreciation of each group's cultural heritage remain a significant part of the educational system. These initiatives are essential for sustaining cultural diversity and fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

Bosnia and Herzegovina indeed offer a fascinating case study in cultural identity and multiculturalism. Its history of diverse influences, from Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule to its more recent experiences with socialism and conflicts, has shaped a unique cultural landscape. The coexistence of various ethnic and religious groups - Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, and others - within the same geographic space has fostered a rich tapestry of traditions, languages, cuisines, and customs.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture is its ability to synthesize and integrate these diverse influences into a cohesive whole while still maintaining distinct identities within communities. This dynamic interplay between different cultural elements reflects the essence of multiculturalism - the recognition and celebration of diversity within a shared space. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina's cultural heritage serves as a reminder of the importance of dialogue, tolerance, and understanding in the face of cultural differences. Despite the challenges posed by historical conflicts and political tensions, there is resilience and commitment among many Bosnians to preserve their multicultural identity as a source of strength and unity.

Studying the construction and definition of cultural identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina can provide valuable insights into how societies navigate issues of diversity, inclusion, and belonging. By examining the mechanisms through which different cultural elements interact and intersect, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of multiculturalism and the ways in which it can be both a source of enrichment and a challenge to social cohesion.

In essence, Bosnia and Herzegovina stands as a testament to the enduring power of multiculturalism and the potential for diverse cultures to coexist and thrive together. By embracing its unique cultural heritage and promoting dialogue and understanding among its various communities, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be a beacon of hope for a more inclusive and harmonious future. Therefore, it is very important to introduce Intracultural education into its educational system, both in official education and in everyday practices.

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Interkulturno i intrakulturno obrazovanje u Bosni I Hercegovini

Sažetak

Dosadašnja praksa unutar bosanskohercegovačkog obrazovnog sistema ukazuje na nedosljednosti u proveđenju intarkulturnih i inetrkulturnih obrazovnih praksi. Oni se čak niti ne razlikuju već se izjednačuju. No, za očuvanje svih vrijednosti koje Bosna i Hercegovina baštini nužno je očuvanje jedinstvenog bosanskohercegovačkog habitusa kojeg sačinjavaju sve kulturne tradicije (bošnjačka, hrvatska, srpska, jevrejska, romska i ostale), a to je moguće samo preko intrakulturnog obrazovanja. Ono što je nužno uraditi na planu obrazovnog sistema jeste uvođenje predmeta/kolegija Intrakultuno obrazovanje u osnovne i srednje škole te provođenje intrakulturne politike kroz ministarstva obrazovanja na nivou države, entiteta i kantona te intrakulturne edukacije u svim segmentima društva. Ovaj rad donosi razlike između interkulturnog i intrakulturnog obrazovanja te donosi smjernice kako provesti politiku nužnog intrakulturnog obrazovanja. Kao paradigma donose se neke pozitivne prakse u okviru bosanskohercegovačke kulture i književnosti, a koje mogu biti dobra podloga za dalje djelovanje.

Ključne riječi: bosansko-hercegovački obrazovni sistem, interkulturalno obrazovanje, intrakulturno obrazovanje, kulturna tradicija