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Philosophical premises of multi-cultural change in Polish school versus educational practice. Management of cultural diversity or multi-cultural chaos?

Abstract: *It's not hard to realize, how composite and complicated is contemporary, global world. Almost every conceptual categories changed their primary meaning and the grounds of the "western" constructional thinking are faltering in their positions guards the colonization social order and conduces the world Europeanization. Modernistic discourse presupposed that school knowledge has got a neutral character, exist out of the history or politics, and lack of the access to it, is equal to the lack of the "civilization". Authors try to show how globalization, mobility and all types of migrations changed the way of breeding, learning and managing of this learning. We also wants show, how many foreigner children are in Polish educational system now, and try to answer the question how should school help them and their parents especially in situation, when, there are not experts engaging multiculturalism, who could teach teachers how have they functioning in multicultural class, and how organize work in various learning environment.*

Keywords: *Education, multiculturalism, postmodernism, school, teaching, environment, management*

Introduction

You don't have to be a philosopher or prominent culture connoisseur to notice how composite, complicated and hard to interpretation and describe is the modern world. Clearly defined conceptual categories, names, truths, values and systems of social organization through the centuries - or at least through decades did a duty as guidelines enabling units to find their place in the world. However they stop to suffice in times, when currents of thoughts, cultural

experiences and ideas for life of more and more mobile societies are mixing very fast like never before.

The grounds of the “western” constructional thinking (fortified by an appropriate constructed educational system) are faltering in their positions to - as Tomasz Szukdlarek [2006, p. 417 in Kwieciński, Z, Śliwerski, B] thinks - guards the colonization social order and conduces the world Europeanization. The assumptions which was made in this spirit and which are connected with the reality, learning or education, based on the catalogue of “only right” truths, so-called metanarrations stop to hold good. From day to day they are substituted by single, alternative truths, systems and ways of activity based on the locality experiences.

Philosophy, and the thinking way about the culture is usually the effect of its time. It represents its power, because- as we read in Adam Sikora’s book [1970, p. 9] - “engaging current and viable topics, it interpenetrates through the colloquial consciousness becoming the integral element of the culture and having an impact on present”.

Globalization, mobility, all types of migrations, from commercially, through these connected with wars or ecological disasters - undoubtedly all of it translates on the way of breeding, learning and managing of this learning.

Until now, education and knowledge were treated as something universal, timeless, something what essentially had to fulfill the rationality standards. Modernistic discourse of education, not even mentioned (because for what?) about the multiculturalism, presupposed- what accentuates Zbyszko Melosik [2006, p. 456 in Kwieciński, Z, Śliwerski, B] - that school knowledge has got a neutral character. It exist out of the history or politics, and lack of the access to it is equal to the lack of the “civilization”. All was clear and lucidly here, the division for what is, and what isn’t education contents - clear, and teacher - omniscient. The need of changes in the curriculum, in the approach for education during the period of multiculturalism and managing of education, which beneficiaries are representatives of various cultures, seems to be in this context not only a nice bow in the diversity direction, but even political and social necessity. How get by with it the Polish school? We will present it in the further part of the text.

Change of education thinking - philosophic perspective

What exactly is the Modernism, which - as we pointed out in the introduction - formed foregoing thinking about institutional education? For the needs of our considerance, face that it is a way of thinking and making a philosophy characteristic for the turn of the 19st and 20st Century. Great social revolutions

and rapid educational and technical progress (characteristic for the mentioned period) couldn't not have an influence on the way of thinking about human and the world. In the social sense, interesting metaphor of the Modernism used (from Detlev Peukert) Bogdan Baran [2003, p. 95], who compared working of the modernism society with the highway: channelized the traffic, confined its speed, indicated the places of turns and entrances, in exchange for the maximal effectiveness.

It is easy to guess what kind of impress on the education was made by the modernistic credence in the possibility of getting to the universal truth about human and the world with simultaneously devaluation of everything what is not in tune of cannon. Unification of views, knowledge, education and mind dominance plus credence, that all people were equipped in the same cognitional contents (and what is an effect of it - they have common criteria of what is good and what wrong, what is beauty and what is ugly, what is moral and what is immoral). Graded science knowledge- as for example in the case of the 19th sociology - placed thinking about human in the rigid frames, labeled the appropriate label and lay it off in a peaceful belief, that it was made the next step to moral advance and social justice.

The Modernism didn't die, still being a one of the grounds of modern philosophy. But, in our opinion, in the modern thinking of culture, it loses its importance. It had to lose. We agree, that it began all of technological changes, for which we appreciate the fact, that today we live in a global society. But now the Modernism- as we can say it metaphorically - devours his own tail, just thanks to the global society.

We can't longer say about the only right truths, life styles, styles of thinking and actions, cognitional styles and styles of learning, when society is so composite. Every day, billions of people exchange the information and knowledge by means of international network, every day billions sit in front of TVs watching, listening, experiencing the multiculturalism on various levels. Every days thousands of refugees and emigrants cross the borders of countries to the new homelands, bringing their own beliefs and culture.

All these social changes are the reason of creating the philosophy called postmodernism. This current is not very liked by classical representatives of philosophical thought. It is often said that it isn't even a philosophy, but only the type of conceptual scrapheap, to which in last recent years are putting all staff and by what is everything explained. But postmodernism became- whatever we like it or not- peg to hang thinking and promoting the multiculturalism idea out.

Postmodernistic philosophers such as Jean Francois Lyotard [1997] or Richard Rorty [2003, Zardecka-Nowak, M, p. 15] - accented in their works, that

neither way of thinking nor learning or cognizing the world are not universal, but dependent on the culture, and language- not a mirror, in which reflected the cultural reality, but an active device, which aerated reality and thinking (we think in a particular language, not out of it [2003, Szachaj, A in Potocka, M, A (ed)]). Conferring the unknown value of the things which are local, ethnic, and also granting the right to coexistence of all cultures, accenting the difference as a value- there are things which we appreciate of Postmodernistic thought, which was not miss the education.

In accordance to the postmodernism, the view about school isolated from the external world is crashing. Probably nobody won't ascertain, that the school is not connected with politics, or pop culture. Educationalists realized themselves, that student is not a clear sheet without views and experiences. The school become the area, on which are clashing a various views, thinking currents, confessions and ways of functioning. Postmodernistic philosophy tries to doesn't discredit any of them, school shouldn't discredit them too. It mustn't- like until now- offer to its alumnus "finished product" in the shape of rigid curriculum, but it should help him to find himself in- as we can tell metaphorically- thousands of half-products, seasonings and recipes, how to connect all of it.

Official multiculturalism - educational prescripts of the Law and school reality

Tatars, Ukrainians, Russians, Iraqis, Iranians, Yemenis, Lebanese, Turkish, Syrians, Germans, Italians, French - these are only chosen examples of nationalities of students who attend Polish schools. According to Krystyna Błęszyńska [2010, p. 23] - the author of report called "Foreigner children in Polish educational establishments" - there is no place in the world, from which not even one representative will not sit in our country in front of school desk. It is necessary to take on the board students from interracial families, where at least one parent has got a nationality different than Polish. We have to add- what is mentioned very seldom in the publications devoted to multiculturalism- students with different confession. All of them according to the Polish Law [2001.10.04, regulation issued by the Minister of Education], have got a right for education. Since recently the managing of multiculturalism in polish educational system have finished on this record (and analogical, which prescribes the duty of education to 18 years old). It is easy to bargain that for representatives of other cultures, schools hadn't got a lot of to offer. The system stipulated, that to school will go foreigner or refugee child regardless of his/her acquaintance (rather unfamiliarity) of Polish language. Students only during the performing

in Polish language Mathematics or Nature lessons burnish the acquaintance of Polish language. The assumption, that foreigner will learn “in the meantime” wouldn’t even so bad, if not a few important details, which are known for us from the pedagogical experience. Before admitting a new foreigner child to the Polish school, aren’t performed any of psychological and pedagogical tests, which allow, even in the minimal way to project his education way. Children often are just located in lower classes. If they don’t manage with learning - and it isn’t hard about it if we don’t know the language- teachers either grade them F or just ignore them. They don’t ask, don’t call for the answers, don’t check homework. In effect, foreign child is either “pushed” from class to class until-thankfully of front office and teachers- don’t leave its premises, or contrarily - will spend in it supplementary years, returning the classes.

The next problems are the Polish lessons. As they are holding after lessons, it happen - as we were informed by the representatives from the center for refugees placed under the Warsaw- that children (this case was connected with young Chechens) don’t reach on them. One part of them - because from the “pocket money” which are giving to their parents from Polish authorities they cannot afford for the tickets, the other part of them- because they have to work to help in livelihood of the family, and also the other part, because after lessons there are obligated to take care of their younger sibling.

Education of foreigners doesn’t conduce also the lack of contact with parents, who - what is often accented by teachers - don’t want to or are not able to cooperate. Their only connectors with Polish culture and language sometimes are just children, who even in minimal way overmastered the Polish language. There were some situations, that foreign parents bring them around to the meetings with teachers, and after - for example - beat them in front of the teacher listening about bad results or inappropriate behavior. Others don’t come at all, because refugees centers refund them only transport aimed at looking for a job, and not for school meetings. There are no (and they are not requisite for anybody) specialized programs preventing conflicts or implementing representatives of other cultures to functioning in Polish school.

The modification were expected in connection with performed in 2010 reform of education amending foregoing Act.

“Firstly – as we read in Maria Roman article [2010] - abolished the rule about payments for learning, which until now foreigners who wanted to learn in secondary schools were subject to. Secondly, appeared the record enabling for performing for foreign students remedial classes which level the educational differences or delays in the educational cycle. Thirdly - probably the most important- the novelization effectuated a new institution to the Polish educational system: teacher’s assistant”. According to the prescripts these

persons will support the teacher working during lesson with foreign child, alleviate and prevent presumptive conflicts proceed from cultural differences, do duty as a middleman between school and parents. Lofty idea, effectively applied in many European countries (Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands), in our country existing only on paper. Why? Firstly: employing of the assistant is a “possibility”, not duty. Secondly: the prescripts don’t specify on which rules and conditions can be employ this assistant and in which range of hours may he/she works, and also who will pay his a salary, or even- what criteria should meet the person who will be employed on this position. From these doubts willingly embrace the Boroughs (they maintaining schools), which are looking for savings. In result, the Boroughs either don’t employ these persons at all or every do it on its own rules. For example, in Lublin only in May 2012 authorities made a decision about employing assistants engaging multiculturalism. Two assistances for whole state [2012, Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców online].

The problem still is unfortunately new program base, which was implemented together with educational reform, which was mentioned above. Document described what, how and in what range children have to be educated on the particular levels of education. It has been- in author’s [2008, Marciniak, Z] mind- an answer for the modern requirements. Meanwhile, if we talk about multicultural school’s requirements, they are treated cursorily or they are entirely excluded. Programs of many subjects practically were not change, they were only described in a different way by means of educational objectives and skills, which at the end of every educational level should have every student. It is also hard to reject the impression, that multicultural contents, in moments where they were appear at all, became kind of “for decency” put into the program, added in the last moment without deeper reflection. It is concurred even by experts from the governmental Centre for Education Development, which paying attention [2010, Roman, M] on the fact, that subject area of the multiculturalism is treated in a new program base in subsidiary way and it is not implemented on a wide range, and in teacher training it is not (maybe except of pedagogical departments) included at all. In result, there are not experts engaging multiculturalism, who could teach teachers how have they functioning in multicultural class, and also how to teach foreigner’s children, how to organize work in various learning environment and how to help to get on by children, whose educational chances at the beginning are worse than their Polish coevals.

Exploiting British experiences [1996, Cohen, L, Lawrence, M, Morrison, K, pp. 301-302] it is recommended to compile “multicultural curriculum”. The curriculum, in which the choice of contents would reflect the multicultural character of society and derives both from the majority culture and from

ethnic experiences of minority. Because they have a right to their culture will find its reflection in the curriculum. Moreover, if we want to education in the best possible way equips students in necessary in modern world competences and preparing for the adult life in a global world, we can't skip them in the curriculum. Multicultural curriculum should also- according to authors- not only presents facts, but more than everything teach a critical approach to them. It is hard to expect, that student, who to the Polish school came for example from Seychelles, where he learned only about the history of his own country in the context of winning with colonizers, will immediately understand what it is going on with details of the French revolution or face for valuable conquests of geographical discoveries and European colonization [2007, Donnelean, p. 14].

To multiculturalism - example of good practices

It will be dishonestly from our side if we will leave out only on criticism of Polish educational system. Although changes will not advance so fast and capably as we want to be, and problems connected with a lack of staff, desire or money get in the way of multiculturalism development in Polish schools, we are also able to find some positive examples. For example tanks to the funds from the European program called Human Capital a lot of foundations, schools and associations compiled and implemented their own programs of lessons and multicultural classes, combat against prejudices, promoting diversity. An interesting example of multicultural project, which included many activities and was intended to various representatives of educational environment was triennial (2009-2011), realized by Education Office of capital city- Warsaw and analogical institution in English Caerdydd, project called Caerdydd-Warsaw Integration Project. The enterprise funded from the European Union project- Comenius within the program called "Whole life learning"[2006.11.15 regulation issued by European Parliament] was aimed at:

- preparing teachers, school employees and administration for working with foreign children,
- constituting the Parents Supporting Group for foreigners,
- compiling the didactic references, leaflets and packages for teachers, which included practical tips facilitated students integration- foreigners in a new environment,
- support for students of pedagogical majors and young teachers who prepare themselves to work in the multicultural environment.

The scientists from the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw, in conjunction with educationalists and with Education Office, prepared a cycle of nine one-hour trainings for teachers (exemplary topics: integration of

foreign students, problems with the identity of students-foreigners). Published materials, i.a.: “Welcoming package for students and parents” (both in version for primary schools and for middle schools) were translated for five languages: English, Chechen, Russian, Ukrainian and Vietnamese [Careddydd – Warsaw Project online].

Any communication – as Marian Golka [2010, pp. 12-13] accentuates – requisite some cultural/lingual competence. Multicultural communication requisite also peculiar translating competence (...) this is a kind of translation based on mutual borrowings and mutual interference of cultures, which create something of a kind of bridge between cultures. This bridge become a peculiar <add value>, so the new culture”.

This and similar projects let (unfortunately to in a whole Poland) for creating this kind of bridge. It remains to have a hope, that the need of its construction, sooner or later will be spotted also by Polish educational authorities.

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