



NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND POLICIES OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION (REFLEXIVE ASPECTS)

I. Koleva*

Department of Ethnology, Faculty of History, Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski', Sofia, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

The article discusses national education policies and priorities for intercultural education in Bulgaria, according to the discipline 'Ethno psychology' taught in the majors Ethnology, Cultural Studies and Psychology.

The article brings out principles and approaches to stimulate the socio-cultural competence of a teacher in high school in the Bulgarian educational system. There are clarified the standard paradigms of intercultural education of the Ministry of Education (MON). There are shown the educational problems of the minorities in the country. The piloted empirical-theoretical model within the ethno-psychological item is introduced.

Key words: educational technology integration, multicultural education, socio-cultural competence, standards, strategies, drop-education students, early school leavers students, ethnic communities and vulnerable groups

The Republic of Bulgaria represents a multiethnic and multicultural society, placing it in the equivalent position with the development and promotion of ethno pedagogical and ethno psychological models related with the intercultural education within the European community.

The reasons for focusing on the right of the lecturer in the high school (and all entities interacting in the educational process) on intercultural basic level are not only demographic. Specification of all markers for the development of the educational institution, namely, ethnic, socio-cultural, environmental, age, legal, language, etc.

The Bulgarian educational system offers reliable pedagogical techniques for the development of students in an intercultural environment. They comply with the European educational standards in countries with long standing traditions in this

respect, as well as with the EU strategy for 'Lifelong Learning', Athens Declaration of socio-cultural diversity (2006), the project of Council of Europe (2006 – 2009) on policies and practices for teaching socio-cultural diversity, the National Strategy of the Ministry of Education and other documents.

The role of higher education is:

- to build on the knowledge and skills that one already has
- to provide the necessary skilled workforce to meet the needs of the national (and global economy) forming competitive professionals, including specialists for the education system
- to support the process of continuous training of personnel at the labor market
- to support development of science and to integrate science in the educational research and educational process
- The system for ensuring the quality of education and faculty includes:
 - internal evaluation systems
 - a survey of the students' opinion at least once for the school year

*Correspondence to: Prof. Dr. Irina Koleva, Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski', Faculty of History, Department of Ethnology, E-mail: kolevairina@yahoo.com

- an accreditation of the universities by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) by the Council of Ministers
- National Qualification Framework (NGF), adopted by PMC 96/2.02.2012
- With the adoption of NQF is covered step 4 of the process of introducing NQF, and the following ones have been already performed or still wait to be performed*:
 - Step 5 – national consultations
 - Step 6 – reforms in legislation
 - Step 7 – distribution of responsibilities between educational institutions, agencies, quality control and other structures
 - Step 8 – an update of the curriculum in accordance with the NQF
 - Step 9 – an inclusion of qualifications in the NQF and
 - Step 10 – self-certification of the NQF in terms of compatibility with the European Qualifications Framework, consistent with the requirements of European higher education.
- The new conditions require restructuring the curriculum – an integration of basic, special in general and special in private occasion scientific disciplines in relevant proportion according to the level of education:
 - 50/30/20 – for Bachelors
 - 20/30/50 – for Masters
 - 10/20/70 – for Doctors
- The curriculum at the universities must comply with the core competencies that are in demand on the labor market by enhancing:
 - the science research in the universities,
 - the link with the economy and the labor market (career guidance in the course of study, accumulation of actual experience in order to achieve self-profiling, accumulation of entrepreneurial experience through training companies)
- The fact that there is high youth unemployment, and employers have difficulties with finding staff with the necessary qualifications speaks for a significant discrepancy between the preparation that the university offers, and the requirements of the labor market.
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Key objectives and priorities in Bulgarian higher education for the period 2013 – 2020 are related to:

- An increase of the number of 30-34 years-old Bulgarian citizens with tertiary education with knowledge, skills and competencies consistent with the requirements of the global labor market
- Constant improving of the efficiency of higher education by:
 - improving the quality of the academic and the practical professional training of students before they enter the labor market (relevance and quality of the programs, of teaching, of internships according to the requirements of the global labor market and to support the development of the national economy)
 - developing the system to create a link between funding and learning outcomes ('product' of higher education)
 - developing of the system for lifelong learning
 - improving the links in the system of higher education – science – business in national and supranational level (including an active development of the researches in universities)
 - providing the necessary educational resources and facilities, including through an effective spending

There is, though it is not so significant in comparison to other European countries, percentage of children of Roma and Turkish origin, who are not enrolled in school, do not attend school or drop out early or they prematurely leave the education system. A small percentage of youngsters with Roma and Turkish origin continue their education at university. The reasons are with socio-economic, socio-cultural, ethno psychological and educational character.

The implementation of a strategy for education in multicultural environment is based on the application and development of pedagogical technologies, structurally subordinated to the reflexive approach as psychological one.

A decision for minorities' education issues may be searched both in minority and majority. The approaches for that are different in accordance with the views of employers, human rights, multiculturalism and nationality.

The social approach considers minority groups, in particular the Roma population, as marginalized social groups. From this perspective education is a prerequisite for success in the labor market.

When the problem is approached from the perspective of human rights, the focus is placed on the equalization of opportunities. According to this interpretation, the most serious reason for the failure of education among ethnic minorities' children is discrimination.

Intercultural approach considers the problem as a result of interethnic relations and focuses on its cultural and socio-psychological aspects. National approaches treat minority groups as political entities and focuses more on their degree of autonomy in the education system than on the specific content of the educational process.

At the individual level the role of higher education is to provide knowledge, skills and competencies that will enable the young people to have great opportunities:

- to continue their lifelong learning;
- to be competitive with their peers from other countries;
- to be successful on the labor market;
- to be active citizens in the global world

At national level it leads to:

- low competitiveness of the economy and labor productivity;
- vulnerability in terms of the financial and economic crisis - growth of groups at risk of poverty and exclusion;
- considerable strain on the social assistance system.

The issue with the staff in the education system usually refers to the subject of quality.

The teacher plays a key role not only to ensure the quality of the educational process, but also to offer a chance for continuing education for all students. This justifies placing special emphasis on staff.

One of the tasks of the Ministry is updating the Strategy for Educational Integration of Minority and develop a standard for intercultural education at the intersection field of civic education as an element of inclusive education.

In 2011/2012, the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues Council of Ministers develop a national strategy for the integration of vulnerable ethnic communities and groups with a focus on Roma. (Time period 2012-2020). This strategy is a policy framework document that sets out guidelines for the implementation of policies for social inclusion of Roma and other ethnic communities and groups living in a similar situation in the Bulgarian society and to coordinate the actions of public authorities, regional and local authorities and civil society organizations for its enforcement. According to it was developed a national action plan with priority - "Education".

The strategy is guided by the principles of the policy framework of the European Union for the Protection of Human Rights, to respect the principle of ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens and non-discrimination based on various grounds, including ethnic origin, Directive 2000/43 / EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, etc.

At the heart of its concepts are encoded the following understanding of the process of social inclusion:

- bilateral activity by the majority and minority aimed at:
 - Breaking the dominant model of ethnic base personality.
 - Ensuring the right of non-discrimination of any person.
 - Bridging the ethnic stereotypes and prejudices through positive representation of minority groups for sustainable change in intergroup relations and change current attitudes and values
 - Overcome ethnically based inequalities in the ability of individuals to education, career development, residence, housing, health and participation in civil society and political life.

Strategic documents of the Ministry of Education have their direct implementation, coordination and control in the **standard for intercultural education. /2013/**

According to this standard there are the following competences of the teacher in a national context:

- knowledge of the political and legal context of socio-cultural diversity;
- reflection on the various dimensions of diversity on internal and external educational environment;
- knowledge and application of pedagogical (general teaching, private teaching and educational, and where it is possible - socializing) technology education in a multicultural and multiethnic environment;
- to know and applicate (дидактометрични) procedures for socio-cultural diversity;
- construction of a multicultural reflection in intellectual, communicative, cooperative and personal level;
 - a change of psychological approaches to determine the form of didactic and educational interaction with children and students.

The philosophy of a concept for the development of Bulgarian education from the current EU strategy (2007-2014) shall be determined by:

- the development of educational institution according to its individual status;
- the pedagogical approach, the selection of basic and additional forms of didactic and educational interaction within the educational institution, community, and government institutions;
- the pedagogical approach governing the selection and structuring of (дидактометричното) content of the subject with value-oriented educational paradigm;
- the psychological approach defining the development and implementation of specific educational technology in primary and additional forms of interaction with the child and student.

The introduction of reflective and ethnocultural value-oriented approaches is determined by our understanding of technological social inclusion of children and students from ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups with a focus on Roma.

Lifelong learning integrates all activities (formal and informal) that develop the personality of the individual to boost their knowledge and

competences. In terms of the macro environment of a market economy the development of the educational institution is substantially altered. This requires every kindergarten and school to seek to impose their own image, their own specific system of education and striving to introduce new psychological approaches. Postmodern concepts in the plan - education involves promoting intercultural reflection in the European educational area.

The criteria for the identification of national education are subject to the European indicators for socio-cultural diversity. The goal setting ones are:

- Publicity - as *an open system* for all educational institutions and community groups who are carriers of the national and European traditions in education;
- Continuity - as a synthesis of the national positive experience of our historical past and present in the educational space, but using the prospect of European integration and interchange of innovative pedagogical technologies;
- Intercultural reflection - as a process of awareness, self-esteem and self-regulation of the educational institution in a particular type and kind of educational institution and the specific location, taking into account the linguistic markers, demographic, geographic, ethnic, environmental and other type of diversity.

NOTES

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