

PERSONAL REFLECTION OF THE TEACHER OF ETHNO-PSYCHOLOGY (SOCIAL-REFLEXIVE ANTHROPOLOGY ISSUE)

Irina Koleva
University of Sofia

Abstract. The article is dedicated to the national educational policies and priorities for intercultural education in Bulgaria regarding the discipline Ethno-psychology, taught at the Faculty of History, Bachelor's Degree specialties: Ethnology, History and Philosophy, and Master's Degree ones: Education in History for the Secondary Education, Historic-Ethnic Models of National Security. Principles and approaches are identified to encourage socio-cultural competence in teachers in the context of higher education in the Bulgarian educational system. Paradigms regarding the standard "Civic, health, ecological and intercultural education" of the Ministry of Education of Bulgaria (2016), in accordance with the Preschool and School Education Act (2016), are clarified. The problems of educational integration of minorities in Bulgaria are highlighted. A piloted empirical-theoretical model from the point of view of ethno-psychology is presented.

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

Context

Bulgaria is a multiethnic and multicultural society, which situates the country in equilateral position regarding the development and dissemination of ethno-pedagogic and ethno-psychologic models of intercultural education within the framework of the European community.

The reasons for focusing on the university lecturer's right (and of all other stakeholders in the process of education) for basic intercultural level are not only of demographic origins. There is a need for refining all measures for development of the educational subject, namely: ethnic, socio-cultural, ecologic, age-related, legal and language-related, etc.

Bulgarian educational system offers reliable pedagogic technologies for student's development in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environment. They correspond to the European educational requirements of countries with established traditions in

the field, as well as to the EC strategy for Lifelong Learning, the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2016 – 2020), the National Strategy for Social Inclusion of Ethnic Communities and Groups at Risk (2012 – 2010) of the National Council for Collaboration on Ethnic and Integration Issues (NCCEII) regarding policies and practices for teaching socio-cultural diversity, the National Strategy of the Ministry of Education for educational integration of children and students of ethnic minorities (2016), in addition to other compulsory and advisory documents.

The role of higher education is:

– to upgrade knowledge, skills and relations regarding professional and personal competencies of the student of ethnology and teacher of civic education, and of the subjects of the historic and philosophic cycles in the case of the school education system;

– to ensure the required workforce qualification for the national (and global) economy by producing competitive professionals, including educators;

– to support the process of lifelong qualification of the workforce on the market;

– to support the development of science and to integrate scientific achievements in the educational and research process, as a result of increased coefficients of the professional fields for the specialties with high quality indicators, as well as additional funding of priority fields and protected specialties – increased quality of education through regulation of the specialties. (2016). All specialties under code “Pedagogy of education in ... (history, philosophy)” – i.e. all specialties giving pedagogic qualification - are prioritized, as well as the specialty ethnology with teaching qualification.

The system for ensuring quality of education and of the academic staff includes:

– internal systems of evaluation;

– researching students’ feedback at least once per academic year;

– institutional and programme accreditation of the higher educational institution and of the specialty, which is performed by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA), Council of Ministers;

– National Qualification Framework (NQF), passed with Decree of the Council of Ministers 96/2.02.2012.

Passing the National Qualification Framework is step 4 of its enforcement. The following are undergoing or under development:

– step 5 – nationwide consultations;

– step 6 – legislation change;

– step 7 – distribution of the responsibilities among the educational institutions, quality monitoring agencies, etc.;

– step 8 – updating the educational programmes to correspond to the National Qualification Framework;

- step 9 – including the qualifications in the National Qualification Framework
- step 10 – self-certification of the National Qualification Framework towards compatibility with the European Qualification Framework, according to the requirements of the European Higher Education.

The external pedagogic conditions require also restructuring the curricula: integrating of fundamental (core), special, generic and specialized scientific disciplines in the following ratio depending on the educational degree:

50/30/20 – for Bachelor’s Degree,

20/30/50 – for Master’s Degree,

10/20/70 – for Doctoral Degree.

Higher education curriculum must also correspond to the key competences demanded by the workforce market, through increasing the research towards integral and global studies.

It is also imperative to establish relations with the economy and workforce market (career orientation during the study, opportunities for professional experience in order to achieve self-guided specialization, accumulating entrepreneurship experience in the field of ethno-cultural diversity in real life professional environment).

The fact that there is a high rate of youth unemployment, at the same time the employers have difficulties finding adequately qualified employees, shows the discrepancy between the training received in the universities and the requirements of the workforce market.

Key goals and priorities of the Bulgarian higher education for the period 2016 – 2020:

1. Increasing the number of the 30 – 34-year-old Bulgarian citizens with completed higher education, who have acquired knowledge, skills and competencies complying with the requirements of the global workforce market.

2. Increasing the higher education efficiency through:

– High quality academic and practical vocational training of students prior to their introduction to the workforce market (adequacy and quality of the programmes, of the teaching methodology based on the reflexive approach, of the internships, with regards to the requirements of the global workforce market and in support of the development of the national economy);

– Developing of a system of bonding the state funding of a higher educational institution to the results of the educational process (the higher educational “product”); focus on the process of teaching in the context of subject-subject approach; use of interactive technologies by the teacher as forms of pedagogical interaction; applying didactic methods encouraging student’s reflexive thinking, as well as triggering all aspects of reflection: communicative, cooperative, intellectual and personal;

- Development of the lifelong learning system;
- Improving the relations within the system higher education – science – business at national and global levels (including active development of science in the universities, doctoral and postdoctoral programmes with practical/applied orientation).

3. Providing the educational resources and equipment needed, including by effective spending the funding under Council of Ministers Decrees № 162 and № 328. The changes of Decree № 162 / 2001 concern also the professional field in higher educational field “Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies”, where the coefficient of the state subsidy per student changes from 1.6 to 1.85.

4. Solving minority educational problems can be initiated by both minorities and majorities. The approaches differ depending on the views regarding social aspects, human rights, multi-culturalism, interculturalism, and nationality.

The social approach views the minority groups, and the Roma population in particular, as marginalized social groups. From this point of view, education is a pre-condition for the success at the workforce market.

When the problem is approached from the human rights point of view, the focus is on equality and equal chances. According to this interpretation, the crucial reason for the failure of education among the minority subjects is discrimination.

The intercultural approach views the problem as a result of inter-ethnic relations and focuses on its cultural and socio-psychological aspects. Applying a strategy for social inclusion of ethnic communities and groups at risk (NCCEII, 2012 – 2020) is regulated by the application and development of pedagogical methodologies, which follow the reflexive approach as psychological one. One of the national plan measures under this approach is: “Improving the quality of education through qualification of the pedagogical specialists/educators for interaction in multi-cultural educational environment and intercultural competence.” Under this measure, the Department of Ethnology realized a scientific educational initiative “Providing conditions for qualification development of kindergarten teachers and pedagogical specialists: Teacher training for the formation of knowledge, skills and competencies for working in intercultural environment” in the field of pedagogical specialists qualification.

The strategic goal of this action is to develop teachers’ personal and professional competences for applying methodologies for working in intercultural educational environment in accordance with the project for intercultural education standard, as well as towards overcoming existing ethnic stereotypes and prejudices (2012).

Proficiency in methodology on:

Operative goals of the project:

1. Recognition and application of interactive technologies of classroom and out-of-class forms of pedagogical interaction in the context of small local and protected schools.
2. Recognition and application of interactive technologies and forms of pedagogical interaction with parents in the context of multi-ethnic environment.
3. Familiarization with compulsory and strategic documents on socio-cultural diversity, intercultural education and educational integration of minorities.
4. Recognition and application of a project of a state educational standard on civic, health, ecological and intercultural education, with focus on intercultural education.

Training range

The total number of trainees – 4500 teachers from small local and protected schools, as well as the other schools throughout the country, who teach, educate and socialize the following groups of students: members of ethnic communities, ethnic groups, migrants' children, refugees' children, emigrants' children. A team of three teachers or other pedagogical specialists from each small local and protected school was trained, and one pedagogical specialist was trained from the other schools, who are to multiply the training after the initial one.

The training was directed to all schools, taking under consideration the specific markers of the region and the town/village, as well as the local teachers and educators in 28 provinces of Bulgaria.

The actions were managed by a team from the Faculty of History, Sofia University, led by the Department of Ethnology¹⁾. The actions included development and piloting of: curriculum and a syllabus, which is an inseparable part of the curriculum. The syllabus includes modules on socio-cultural competence of the teacher and the student, as well as interactive methods for encouraging personal and professional competences to be developed by the teacher as a result of the training. Formally, the syllabus is presented by: annotation, prerequisites, trainee's competences, training equipment, topics covered in the module, bibliography, electronic resources and didactic materials and tools. In terms of contents, the following were developed and piloted: methodology for realization of the syllabus, methods for conducting the teacher training according to the respective school profiles, didactic materials and tools.

The qualification process is based on an educational packet: curriculum, schedule, trainer's manual, teacher's manual, and additional notebooks. The main parameters of the teacher training curriculum and the syllabus are: presented through a concept of methodology concept, priorities, methods of teacher training, methodology of teaching students, didactic materials, feedback on the training,

functions of the didactic materials: diagnostic parameters of the teaching contents, level of proficiency of each trainee.

Length of the training – up to 32 hours face-to-face and 32 hours distance consultancy of each trainee on preparing a practice-oriented product. The consultancy was delivered via a distance learning platform of the partner: <http://sido.niod.bg>

Topics for face-to-face training:

- Socio-cultural teacher competence;
- Ethno-pedagogical models of education in multi-cultural environment;
- Ethno-psychological models of education in intercultural environment;
- Pedagogical and specific didactic methodology (with focus on bilingual) forms of interaction with the student in intercultural environment;
- Ethno-pedagogical models of the interaction “family-educational institution”.

The training was completed by each trainee presenting a practice-oriented design with focus on interactivity; certification – receiving a certificate of attendance in the cycle of face-to-face training and assessment on the solution of the interactive practical task to apply the training to the particular teaching context, e.g. characteristic for the teacher’s class and school.

The monitoring and evaluation of the training results consisted of: formative monitoring and assessment of the face-to-face training, and distance learning monitoring and assessment, diagnostic tools.

The result covers: changed teacher attitude towards working in intercultural environment, changed parent disposition through multiplication of the training by the teachers – multipliers (training other teachers) of educational integration, implementation of pedagogical and specific didactic methodology for education in multi-ethnic environment, improved final results of the students in cultural educational fields and their realistic self-evaluation during the process of education, decreased number of students dropping out of the educational system, successful re-integration of dropped-out students, and enhanced professional qualification of the teachers.

The national approach treats the minority groups as political subjects and focusses on their degree of autonomy in the educational system rather than the specific educational contents.

At personal level, the role of higher education is to provide conditions for acquiring knowledge, skills and competences, which to enable the students to:

- continue their education throughout their life;
- be competitive among their peers from other countries;
- succeeded at the workforce market;
- be active citizens of the global world.

At national level, it leads to:

- low compatibility of the economy and workforce productivity;

- vulnerability in case of financial and economic crisis – growth of the group at risk of poverty and exclusion;
- substantial load on the system of social support.

Discussion

The issue about human resources in the educational system usually concerns the issue of quality. Teachers play crucial role not only in ensuring the quality of the educational process, but also in student lifelong learning.

The national educational priorities have to comply with the Preschool and School Education Act (2016) and the Higher Education Act. The intersection is the introduction of the subject “Civic Education” in the system of secondary education. It is imperative courses on inclusive education to be introduced in higher education system. Department of Ethnology, Faculty of History, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” is the only academic department which has introduced such lectures.

The National Council for Collaboration on Ethnicity and Integration with the Council of Ministers developed a National Strategy for Integration of Ethnic Communities and Groups at Risk, focused on the Roma, in 2011/2012 (for the period 2012 – 2020). This Strategy is a political framework document, stating the guidelines for realization of the policy for social inclusion of Roma and other ethnic communities and groups, who live in similar conditions in Bulgarian society, as well as for coordinating the actions of the government institutions, regional and local authorities and civil organizations for its realization. A national action plan with priority field Education was developed accordingly. The Strategy complies with the principles of the EU political framework on human rights protection, for following the principle of guarantee of equal opportunities for all citizens and prevention of discrimination based on differences, including ethnic origin – Racial Equality 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 of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, etc.

It is based on the following concepts regarding social inclusion:

- Joint activity on both minority and majority side towards overcoming the dominating model of general ethnic individual;
- Ensuring the right of non-discrimination for each individual;
- Overcoming the ethnic stereotypes and prejudices through positive representation of the minority groups towards sustainable change in inter-group relations and in current attitudes and values;
- Overcoming ethnic-based inequality for individual opportunities for education, work, residence, living conditions, health, participation in civic structures and political life.

Teachers in the field of ethno-psychology must:

- Know about the political and legal context of the socio-cultural diversity;
- Possess the ability to reflect on the different dimensions of diversity with respect to the external and internal educational environment;
 - Know about and apply ethno-pedagogical (general didactic, specific didactic and educational, as well socializing if applicable) methodology of education in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environment;
 - Know about and apply didactic metric procedures for socio-cultural diversity;
 - Encourage student development of multi-cultural reflection at intercultural, communicative, cooperative and personal level.

The philosophy of a concept for Bulgarian higher education development is determined by:

- Student development regarding their individual status and specific educational needs;
 - The pedagogic approach, which determines the choice of predominant and additional forms and methods of educational interaction within an educational institution, faculty, department;
 - The pedagogic approach, which determines the choice and structuring of the didactic metric contents of the subjects with value-oriented educational paradigm;
 - The psychological approach which determines the development/design and application of specific pedagogical methodology in the scientific field taught.

The implementation of reflective and ethno-cultural value-oriented approaches is determined by our understanding about social inclusion in students – ethnologists.

Conclusion

Lifelong learning integrates all activities (formal and informal) which develop the individual personality in order to simulate their knowledge and competences. The macro-environment of the student development has significantly changed in the case of market economy. This enforces each specialty (faculty – department) to strive to establish a unique vision, own peculiar system of education and zeal for implementing cutting-edge psychological approaches.

The post-modern concepts of education focus on encouraging intercultural reflection in the European education sphere.

The criteria for national educational identity follow the European indicators of socio-cultural diversity. The following indicators are fundamental:

- Public access – as an open system for all educational subjects and social groups, which are bearers of national and European traditions in education;

– Continuity – as a synthesis of the positive national experience of our historic past and present in the educational field, at the same time utilizing the perspective of European integration and mutual exchange of innovative pedagogical methodologies;

– Intercultural reflection – as a process of acquiring awareness, self-evaluation and self-regulation by the student, taking into consideration the markers of linguistic, demographic, geographic, ethnic, ecologic and other types of diversity.

NOTES

1. “Providing conditions for qualification development of kindergarten teachers and pedagogical specialists: Teacher training for the formation of knowledge, skills and competencies for working in intercultural environment” – Department of Ethnology lecturers statement: Assoc. Prof. Veselin Tepavicharov, Dr. Habil. – President of the consortium of 6 universities and 43 NGOs; Prof. Irina Koleva, PhD – training manager; Assoc. Prof. Dzheni Madzharov, PhD – teacher trainer and author of training materials; Assoc. Prof. Tanya Boneva, PhD – author of a textbook; Senior Assist. Prof. Violeta Kotseva - teacher trainer, author of textbooks and distance learning consultant; PhD Candidate Georgy Bogdanov – expert on coordination the NGO sector.

In the further process of dissemination of the actions, the following PhD candidates of the Department participated: Aneliya Andreeva, Petar Zarev and Tzvetelin Simov.

The initiative was realized with the management and according to the original idea of the National Institute for Training Headmasters, Ministry of Education and Sciences. Director: Aneliya Andreeva, and coordinator of the qualification forms - Petar Zarev.

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✉ **Prof. Dr. Irina Koleva**
Department of Ethnology
Faculty of History
University of Sofia
15, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.
1504 Sofia, Bulgaria
E-mail: kolevaira@gmail.com