



Ewa Ogrodzka-Mazur – a full professor in the Institute of Education at the Faculty of Arts and Educational Science in Cieszyn, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.

Research interests: early school pedagogy, multi- and intercultural education, social and educational policy, the quality of academic training in the acquisition of intercultural competence and theories and models of intercultural studies

✉ eom1@wp.pl

id <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9990-6176>

Educational Science in Cieszyn, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.

Research interests: early school pedagogy, pedeutology, multi- and intercultural education.

✉ eom1@wp.pl

id <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9797-2591>



Anna Szafrńska – Ph.D. hab., assistant professor in the Institute of Education at the Faculty of Arts and

УДК: 37.09

<https://doi.org/10.32405/2411-1317-2023-4-20-25>

CULTURAL TRANSMISSION IN MODERN SCHOOL: PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE – TYPICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF PRACTICE – SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Abstract: The suggestion comprised in the study of bringing education closer to the natural conditions of cultural transmission – and thus moving away from the traditional ideology of cultural transmission, reflecting the development of children and youth based on the compliance of their behavior with specific cultural standards – may constitute a valuable pedagogical offer. It is based on the assumption that both the processes of culturalization and primary and secondary socialization enable students to grow into the culture (to assimilate the existing cultural values) and to gain a specific place in the community. On the other hand, they allow children and youth, owing to their subjective self-fulfilling abilities, to “create” some new, socially accepted values in the form of cultural products, and thus to create a “new” quality of culture of this particular group or community.

Keywords: school culture; multi- and intercultural education; cultural identity; cultural transmission

Introduction: contemporary school as a “learning culture”

Applying the thesis on culture as the basic orientation of contemporary education results – according to J. Bruner’s concept – in defining school as a learning culture. Its basic task is to support children and young people in learning to use tools for creating meaning and in adapting to the world in which they live, in changing it as needed, and in shaping their identity and self-esteem and strengthening their chances of coping with the world both at school and outside it (Bruner, 1996, p. 69; Bruner, 2006; Nowosad, 2019). The sociocultural changes taking place in Poland and Europe, as well as the creation of

multicultural society and communities, make it especially difficult for children to “read” the multiplicity of meanings of the surrounding reality and to form their own identity. Thus, does contemporary school education really help students learn and understand the cultural heritage, and at the same time overcome the myth that the attachment to tradition, centuries-old values and norms of cultural behavior is a source of good and children’s growing into values that will become important from the point of view of the development of their identity (Korzeniecka-Bondar, 2003; Ogrodzka-Mazur, 2007)? Does this school prepare students to live and broaden their views on the past, present and future of their own region, perceived in the broad context of the country, Europe and the world, and to overcome the myth that the system of values established a priori by adults (most often preferring the “values of the outgoing generation”) is the best? Does education really have a chance to support cultural diversity and to protect it – on the one hand against globalization, and on the other – against discrimination of minority (ethnic, religious) groups, overcoming the myth that the Other is a stranger and an enemy?

Transmission of culture as one of educational ideologies – from school transmission of culture to cultural transmission

Apart from romanticism and progressivism, the transmission of culture is one of the oldest trends in the development of Western educational ideology, emphasizing the task of transmitting to the present generation the resources of knowledge, norms and values accumulated in the past. In educational work, it is assumed that “knowledge and values – first located in culture – are then internalized by children through imitation of adult behaviour models, or through direct education with the use of rewards and penalties. [...] The society-centered school of cultural transmission emphasizes what is common and established and focuses on the necessity of learning through discipline in relation to the social order” (Kohlberg, Mayer, 1993, p. 54). Even though it is nowadays emphasized that such an approach to cultural transmission reflects primarily the development of children based on the compliance of their behavior with specific cultural standards, and does not refer to their personal knowledge and experiences, it is still the dominant educational reality – school transmission of culture. According to D. Klus-Stańska, it is based on an attempt to “select some of its elements from the cultural heritage in a specific form in order to present them to students as the only valid version of description, explanation and interpretation intended to be registered and recorded” (Klus-Stańska Stańska, 2002, p. 77; 2019, pp. 7-20). In this way, teachers most often provide “ready-made” and unambiguous information about cultural values, taken mainly from school curricula and/or readings. The school transmission of culture implemented in this way becomes a means of symbolic violence against students in the form of imposing meanings and their uniform interpretation on them (instilling some specific values into subsequent generations). This is particularly important at the first stage of education, when a significant number of children (entering the system of organized, methodical learning) experience a strong acculturation shock, conditioned by the difference between the cultural system (values) of the family home and of school.

Other possibilities in this respect are created by cultural transmission, enabling the personal and social reconstruction of the existing culture through the natural growth of learners into the culture of the community, which leads to the creation of personal worlds within a community of meanings, i.e. a dialogical encounter with culture and the Other (Klus- Stańska, 2019). The proposal to bring school education closer to the natural conditions of cultural transmission may constitute a valuable pedagogical offer that may find wider application in educational practice.

In search for a model (new models) of constructing knowledge at school

Cultural contexts

I. Relationship: child – culture – education

In approaching the relationship: child – culture – education, school pedagogy can adopt the cultural orientation that both links the sphere of culture with values and personal self-development, and emphasizes the freedom and self-determination of the individual, according to which:

- an individual has independence towards culture, consisting in the freedom to apply an attitude to it (outside or within oneself) and towards possible cultural determinism. The form of this attitude is self-awareness. This freedom constitutes the specificity, the essence of a human being,

- a specifically human way of existence is focused on values as elements of culture. The individual intuitively anticipates and particularizes them, and they attract the individual. This is freedom not towards culture, but within culture (Burszta, 2008; Giddens, 2008).

In the proposed approach, both the processes of culturalization and primary and secondary socialization become important in education. They enable, on the one hand, growing into culture (assimilation of the existing cultural values) and gaining a specific place in the social community, while on the other hand, they allow the individual, owing to one's subjective self-fulfillment abilities, to "create" new, socially accepted values in the form of cultural products, and thus a "new" quality of culture of a particular group or community.

II. Creating the sense of multidimensional cultural identity

The formation of learners' sense of multidimensional cultural identity from the individual and social perspective is also their self-definition, which they must be able to develop in the process of gradual growing up and to reformulate in the course of their whole lives. The individual's orientation in the surrounding cultural reality, which develops in this way, results in a system of "meanings" formulated by people significant to that individual in specific family, school and non-school situations, which are also a source of various values (their possible "readings") and of developing the ability to evaluate the acquired knowledge and experience. The sources of information about oneself that may become the basis for shaping a child's sense of identity in natural and constructed educational situations include:

- observing one's behavior and its consequences,
- observing other people's behavior and comparing oneself to them,
- obtaining information directly from other people (others' opinions about me),
- social categorizations related to the awareness of belonging to particular social groups (categories) – e.g. family, school, peer group, region, nation, Europe and the world,
- insight into one's own personality.

III. Raising sensitivity to the other and recognizing the dissimilarity of people from other cultures – towards the modification of stereotypes and ethnic prejudices

The perception of the social world during childhood and adolescence includes the knowledge already possessed by learners about the co-occurrence of various human characteristics and the knowledge about different kinds of people and their typical behaviors, which translates into their individual way of perceiving Others. The results of many studies conducted in this area confirm the occurrence of all types of stereotypes and prejudices at all age levels in children aged between 7 and 13 years. Some analyses of the empirical data regarding Polish students allow one to conclude that they have quite clearly crystallized and quite strong negative attitudes towards most groups of national minorities living in Poland, and their attitudes of reluctance towards others persist – contrary to their peers from Western European countries – for quite a long time (Weigl, 1999, p. 31, Nikitorowicz, 2020). The important factors maintaining and strengthening stereotypes and prejudices that constitute the specific "paradigm of the alien" perceived by children include:

- factors related to the social structure (social norms functioning in the family and school environment, patterns of social interaction dominating in the peer group, social indifference and passivity towards various manifestations of prejudice and discrimination),
- personality factors (lack of tolerance, authoritarianism, tendency to conformism, frustration and aggressive behaviour, low social status of the environment of life),
- cultural factors – ideologies in force in a particular culture, prejudices appearing in early socialization (Kofta, Jasińska, 2001).

The above-mentioned factors contribute significantly to the stereotypical consolidation of the image of themselves and others in children's minds, regardless of the experience and cultural competence they acquire. The analysis of the conducted experimental research on the modification of stereotypes and prejudices among early school learners allows one to confirm both children's clearly visible susceptibility to influences aimed at shaping a negative attitude towards foreign ethnic groups and nations, as well as their susceptibility to activities that weaken such stereotypes and prejudices (Weigl, 1999, pp. 140-142;

Niekrewicz, 2019, pp. 35-46). This also creates an opportunity to undertake educational activities aimed at “weakening” the consolidated negative stereotypes and prejudices and at modifying them.

IV. Communication and cultural dialogue

The basis for “being” in one’s own culture and for understanding other cultures is language, which at the same time is a “tool” for the child to communicate with others, a “material” for creative activity and an object of cognition. In the last ten years, appreciating the role of the pragmatic factor has attracted the attention of researchers to analyzing the development of children’s speech in the aspect of processes of social communication. From this point of view, it should be assumed that whenever a child speaks or listens to the speech of others, the process of strengthening their social structure and forming their cultural identity takes place. This phenomenon can also be interpreted in the following way: individuals come to master their social roles through the communication process.

The functioning of children and young people in the cultural environment enables them to have systematic linguistic contacts with peers – the members of other communities and societies, and at the same time this often creates natural situations enhancing simultaneous participation in two cultures and two language systems. Bilingualism acquired in this way may be “additive” – enabling the achievement of high competences in both languages, or “subtractive”, in the case of which the language of higher prestige (of the majority or dominant culture) replaces the first language (of the minority culture) and does not allow the individual to achieve proper competence in any of them (Czykwin, Misiejuk, 2002; Rocławska-Daniluk, 2020). From the point of view of educational activities, it is worth paying particular attention to the so-called integrative communication. It is the basis for intercultural dialogue, combining the values of different cultures and allowing community members to maintain mutual contacts on the basis of cooperation (while eliminating conflict situations) and communication that protect against possible non-acceptance in the new cultural environment. In such communication, the child – without combining cultural components from both language systems – borrows some selected elements from the new culture that enable them to avoid internal conflict – situations of tension and stress (Nikitorowicz, 2000, pp. 85-104, Nikitorowicz, 2009).

Cognitive contexts

I. Motives for exploring the world and learning

One of the important goals of school education is to develop the cognitive processes of students and their orientation in the environment. This development is characterized by intense motivation to learn about the surrounding world of people, things and phenomena and to acquire (in the learning process) social competences which determine the effectiveness of functioning in social situations at school and outside it. Developmental theories emphasizing the cultural and social context of education and teaching highlight the role and importance of the double social structure in which the child participates, namely the relationships with peers – the world of children and the “objective reality” – the existing one, created and imposed by adults – the world of adults (Erikson, 2000; Arcimowicz, Łaciak, 2022). The dichotomous nature of the functioning of the two social worlds in the life of an adolescent implies the necessity to meet their basic needs, which are revealed in the process of:

- symbiosis (close connection and unity with the closest environment) – the need for bonding, closeness with and acceptance by others, conditioning the sense of security in the human world;
- separation (the gradual emergence of the Self from the symbiotic unity) – the need for identity, which enables the building of boundaries between the Self and Other People;
- individuation (development of internal autonomy of the Self) – the need for self-fulfilment, exploration of the environment, independent activity, expressing one’s Self (Małkiewicz, 2002, pp. 16-17).

The identified needs for bonding, identity and self-fulfilment become the basic developmental determinants of the pace, dynamics and direction of the child’s cognitive activity (including their own creative activity), enabling them to have a close relationship with the near and further cultural environment, which is also favourable for “building” the representation of one’s own person – related, among other things, to maintaining one’s own identity, to maintaining or increasing one’s position

in the social system of meanings, to having influence on the surrounding reality (Reykowski, 2022, pp. 59-75).

II. Constructing knowledge at school: learning through dialogue and cultural contact

School pedagogy implies the need for a different approach to the process of acquiring knowledge by a child – the transition from monologue education to dialogue education related to the creation of meanings. As J. Bruner – the author of the term “interpretive turn” – emphasizes, “creating meaning involves locating encounters with the world in their proper cultural context in order to learn “what it is about”. Although meanings reside in the mind, they have their source and reference in the culture in which they are created. This cultural positioning of meanings ensures their negotiability and immersion in communication” (Bruner, 1996, p. 3). This assumption translates into changes in educational theories regarding such areas such as:

- the teacher’s knowledge – the important role of personal pedagogical theories, personal reflection on one’s own practice, focus on alternative educational solutions,
- the student’s knowledge – the existence of many “possible worlds” and their interpretations, understanding dialogue, readiness for “disobedience in thinking”, creative thinking, hidden school curriculum,
- classroom communication – the social nature of learning, cooperation in a group for a common goal (task), the research and creative function of speech, the importance of exploratory speech (thinking aloud),
- didactic planning – spontaneous experimentation, tips, improvisations, goals understood as intentions and general aims (Klus-Stańska, 2002, pp. 65-67).

Conclusion: culture and education – relationship perspectives

Outlining the perspectives of the relationship: culture and education involves the adoption of the basic assumption that education can only be conceived through the lens of understanding the culture. This assumption gives rise to the most important recommendations for educational theory and practice:

- demonstrating (by school) the specific sensitivity to the changing contexts of contemporary culture, also by introducing new thinking and action strategies in the work of both teachers and students,
- preparing children and young people to participate in a changing culture by acquiring the competence to understand it and determine their place in it,
- orienting education towards the construction of learners’ multidimensional cultural identity,
- building the school as a space for interpersonal interactions (transition from monologue education to cultural dialogue).

As J. Bruner aptly notes, education should therefore not “be limited solely to ordinary school issues, such as curricula, standards or verification of students’ skills. What one chooses to do in relation to school only makes sense when considered in the broader context of what society intends to achieve by investing in education of the young generation. The understanding of education [...] is a function of the way of perceiving the culture and its aspirations, not only the declared ones” (Bruner, 1996, p. 4).

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Ева Огородзька-Мазур, професор Інституту освіти на факультеті мистецтв і педагогічних наук у Цешині Сілезького університету в Катовіце, Польща.

Коло наукових інтересів: рання шкільна педагогіка, мульти- та міжкультурна освіта, соціальна та освітня політика, якість академічної підготовки в набутті міжкультурної компетентності та теорії та моделі міжкультурних досліджень

Анна Шафранська, доктор філософії, доцент факультету мистецтв і педагогічних наук Інституту освіти у Цешині Сілезького університету в Катовіце, Польща.

Коло наукових інтересів: рання шкільна педагогіка, педевтологія, полі- та міжкультурна освіта.

КУЛЬТУРНА ТРАНСМІСІЯ В СУЧАСНІЙ ШКОЛІ: ПОПЕРЕДНІЙ ДОСВІД – ТИПОВІ ПРОЯВИ ПРАКТИКИ – ЗАПРОПОНОВАНІ ШЛЯХИ ВИРШЕННЯ

Анотація: Пропозиція полягає в дослідженні наближення освіти до природних умов культурної трансмісії – і, таким чином, відходу від традиційної ідеології культурної трансмісії, відображення розвитку дітей та молоді на основі відповідності їхньої поведінки конкретним культурним стандартам – може становити цінну педагогічну пропозицію. Базується на припущенні, що як процеси культуралізації, так і первинна та вторинна соціалізація дають змогу учням вrostи в культуру (засвоїти наявні культурні цінності) і отримати особливе місце в спільноті. З іншого боку, вони дозволяють дітям і молоді, завдяки їхнім суб’єктивним здібностям до самореалізації, «створювати» якісь нові, суспільно прийнятні цінності у вигляді культурних продуктів, і в такий спосіб створювати «нову» якість культури. цієї конкретної групи чи спільноти.

Ключові слова: шкільна культура; полі- та міжкультурна освіта; культурна ідентичність; культурна передача