Alicja Szerląg

CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE PEDAGOGICAL THOUGHT OF MEILĖ LUKŠIENĖ – INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE EXEMPLIFIED BY SOCIALISATION AND EDUCATION IN POLISH FAMILIES INHABITING THE VILNIUS REGION

Annotation. Individual and common self-identifications determining their specificity take place in given areas, predominantly the cultural ones. However, what's crucial is the perspective that conceptualises such identities. For instance, sense of the national belonging of both individuals and communities constitutes one of such perspectives. It is shaped by various determinants, starting from cultural heritage of a given nation through established social and cultural practices which result from socialisation and education at the cultural meeting points. The aim of this article is to present the cultural context of socialisation and education exemplified by Polish families living in the Vilnius region with reference to those, among whose the cultural difference is manifested by their national diversity. The issue that gave rise to this article was the attempt to interpret the cultural context of the pedagogical thought of Meilė Lukšienė, crucial for multicultural discourses within pedagogy.

Keywords: multiculturalism, national diversity, cultural heritage, intergenerational cultural transmission, socialisation, education, area of cultural self-identification.

Cultural diversity in social sphere

Far-reaching cultural diversity is a specific feature of a contemporary world. Hence, cultural diversity, manifesting itself in almost all spheres of human functioning – particularly tackling the spheres rooted within cultural heritage – also must be reflected in processes resulting in shaping cultural identity. It predominantly influences socialisation occurring within surrounding fundamental for the human, i.e. the family and local environment, as well as (perhaps crucially) education that intentionally shall focus on cultural differences recognising and manifesting them in school practices in order to – consequently – create social relations at the borderlands of cultures thanks to intercultural competences acquired by the young generation. Contemporarily it is difficult to find a place, especially culturally significant, that (to various degrees) would not be specified by cultural diversity. It may be even assumed that a contemporary man is "sentenced" to multiculturalism, which does not have to be a threat because of destabilisation of monocultural order. Quite the contrary, such approach may result in generating culturally new qualities that situate the culturally diverse individuals and communities at the cultural meeting points, becoming a unique cultural antidote while dealing with the conflicts caused by cultural differences. Hence, multiculturalism – spreading officially and informally to the human life spheres – is a specific cultural system relying "on the basis of democratic principles that – apart from genuine differences – is specified as well by the element of coherence, allowing the multicultural community to undertake common tasks and reach assumed goals" [1]. Such multicultural system, according to A. Sadowski, functions at three basic levels [2]. The first level refers to real cultural diversity of a given community, of frequently different provenance, that can generate multidimensional areas of everyday practice of given individuals and communities that shall possess defined competences to deal with such areas. Subsequently, the second level refers to informal social rules that regulate multicultural system, and if recognised – it enables cultural coexistence at the cultural meeting points. Therefore, it may be assumed that such principles:

– are located concurrently within axio-normative areas of each community, not causing tensions in culturally diverse interactions,

– may determine axiological attributes of identities – personal, social and last but not least – the cultural ones,

– result from the negotiations of values and interests, i.e. dialogue at the meeting point.

Therefore, it is possible to create non-dual cultural area, which multidimensional nature stimulates coexistence despite cultural diversity [3]. As a result, the opinion-forming environments shall perceive coexistence of culturally diverse groups as a positive phenomenon, similarly as the society at large, what in turn would establish institutions in charge of supporting the multicultural order. Such circumstances denote the third level of multicultural system [2]. The process of becoming a culturally diverse society – a multicultural society, where the cultural participation leads towards multidimensional cultural identity and subsequently towards the dialogic coexistence at the cultural meetings point requires socialisation and educational activities. Only then it is possible for the multiculturalism to become a specific system practised on a daily basis in a culturally diverse society.

Meilė Lukšienė on the cultural dimension of upbringing and education

An outstanding historian of education – Meilė Lukšienė, significantly exposed in her works cultural contexts of upbringing and education [4] as she assumed that a human grows culturally in a family, and culture is the foundation of the nation's existence. In turn, according to this distinguished scholar, the upbringing was perceived as a cultural process implying education as a component of culture. As a consequence schools were assigned with the task of transmission and cultivation of the cultural traditions. Such conceptualisation of a cultural area exposes the thesis of Meilė Lukšienė, that each human and each nation has the right to exist as individual and equal subjects. Therefore, individuals establishing such a nation have indispensible right to preserve their identities, whereas native culture is the factor guaranteeing perseverance of the nation and its identity, as a nation creates own culture and matures in own culture what consequently contributes to the growth of moral awareness of each human and entire nation as a cultural community. Hence, significant importance shall be drawn to this, what consolidates such culture, i.e. the cultural heritage, what means "cultural goods that are transmitted from generation to generation. Therefore it may be concluded that cultural heritage is all what matters most and is mostly valued, but on the other hand – what is undesirable and accidental. Cultural heritage refers to the majority of cultural products of some group, hence it refers to such categories as culture, tradition, homeland, patriotism, cultural identity and cultural values. The specificity of cultural heritage refers to the permanence of some ideas, objects, behaviours, their objectification, intergenerational transmission and influence on others' behaviour. Hence, it is such a part of the culture that passed the exam of duration in time. <…> Cultural heritage may function within the experiences of the members of a community by transmission of socialisation and upbringing. Moreover, it may be preserved in museums and other institutions protecting the evidence of the history of civilisation, culture and nations in order to shape attitudes towards the ancestors' achievements, evoking emotional and aesthetic impressions, integrating groups and preserving their cultural continuity. Hence the undertaken educational activities protecting cultural heritage" [5]. Next generations have therefore subjective attitude towards cultural heritage, i.e. are active, critical, assessing, selective and evaluating. „Each new generation losses or abandons something from the heritage, whether accidentally or spontaneously, by the way of aware rejection or sacrifice, or by forced historical loses. Each recent community highlights from its heritage preferable elements positively featured due to their usefulness for the contemporary times, privileged and designed for the continuity of further generations, e.g. the "canon of a culture" [6]. Therefore, „each next generation adds something from itself to the heritage, including corrections, inventions, improvements, new versions, borrowings and results of own inventions. Nonetheless also – unfortunately – own failures and mistakes" [6]. Hence, the range of the cultural heritage embraces all cultural goods transmitted from generation to generation, both valued and appreciated, but also accidental and undesirable. As a consequence, a human, as Meilė Lukšienė emphasised, is the host of own culture, its protector and user. In such culture a human finds its aim and meaning of own life, guaranteeing existence and continuity, as it is the culture that enables human maturing in all spheres [4]. Cultural heritage, i.e. the cultural products, ideas, customs, behaviours and attitudes towards the ancestors' achievements, constitutes the premises of cultural self-identification and subsequently the establishment of the cultural identity, directing and interspersing intergenerational transmission of cultural contents in socialisation and education.

Intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage exemplified by socialisation and education in Polish families inhabiting the Vilnius region

With reference to the pedagogical concept of Meilė Lukšienė, it is acknowledged to claim

that the process of shaping cultural identity occurs within the necessity and the choice [7], whereas its conceptualisation depends on the possessed and the current experiences and various cultural contents at the cultural meeting points. Therefore a human, functioning in a culturally diverse society, with accompanied changes occurring within, must undertake permanent self-identification, as results of which individuals define their cultural identity or identities. Therefore, factors determining establishment and preservation of the identity within given community include:

1. influence of historical facts (tradition),
2. impact of the belonging to a specific system of social structure,
3. influence of the culture anthropologically perceived as integral,
4. psychological and social conditions of existence changing within individual and communal life biographies. [8]

All these factors are manifested upon the process of shaping personal identity, establishing the fundamental structure of "me", based on individual experiences [8], as well as the group identity that altogether influence the quality of human's behaviour within own culture and at the cultural meeting point. Multidimensional and complex character of these factors makes it difficult to define those among them, that determine cultural belonging unambiguously. Therefore, I made the spheres of cultural self-identification of Polish families living in Vilnius region the subject of research, as they determine the intergenerational transmission of the cultural heritage, i.e. the native socialisation. The research made in May 2012 embraced 77 Polish families living in nationally diverse local communities of the Vilnius city and Vilnius region. Analysis of the gathered empirical material allows me to claim that the cultural context of functioning of the researched families is manifested in the following spheres:

– citizenship sphere – a Pole as a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania, often referred to as Polish Lithuanian,

– local sphere – a Pole as a member of nationally diverse local community,

– multicultural sphere – orientation in the everyday practices of multinational local community towards common culture and own cultural heritage.

According to the research, axiological assumptions sensitising towards own and other members of the community national diversity refer to: tolerance (26 %), mutual respect (23 %), respect towards national diversity (16 %), command of the neighbours' language (12 %), knowledge on the culture and history of the neighbours' nation (8 %), openness towards other cultures (4 %), and common homeland (3 %). Despite the fact that the indicated values cannot be explicitly assign to the entire population of the researched, they are sufficient to ensure agreement in nationally diverse local communities. Such values should be also considered as crucial assumptions of the native socialisation as the dualistically socialising and upbringing type of a family is the dominating pattern (83,1 %), distinguished on the basis of attitude towards traditions and transmission of cultural values in multiethnic life circumstances [9]. Such a pattern of a family equally values Polish and Lithuanian cultures, hence such families tender Polish culture, as it is – in their opinion – the national heritage of the ancestors that have lived in the Vilnius region from generation to generation, whereas Lithuanian culture is valued because it constitutes the national heritage of a country they live in, and it is the heritage of their neighbors. Therefore, while upbringing their children, such families are motivated both by this what is Polish, but also what is Lithuanian. As a result, it is not an issue for them to be a Lithuanian Pole. Significantly lower percentage of the researched families (i.e. 13,0 %) is constituted by the pattern of ethnocentric socialisation and education family, i.e. such ones that values Polish culture as the most important and indispensible for the process of upbringing. Such families experience strong feeling of "being Polish", therefore they undertake activities for the sake of preserving Polish cultural heritage and it is the only heritage they refer to positively (similarly as in the case of own national community). Small percentage of the researched families (3 %) may be defined as a disoriented family, as in such families it is not clear in which cultures they want to bring up their children - in Polish, Lithuanian, or both. In such families the cultural orientation of socialisation and upbringing is generally determined by an accident, or a given situation. As a result there are no tasks undertaken for the sake of tendering Polish or Lithuanian cultural heritage. Hence, basically, their attitude to others does not depend on their nationality. Nonetheless, there was no case reported among the researched families that would – despite Polish national belonging – solely identify with Lithuanian culture and consequently bring up their children to become good Lithuanians. The indicator of the identification among children of the researched families within Polish and Lithuanian community confirms such findings, as 62,8 %   defined their

identification with Polish community as strong and profound, whereas such strong attachment to Lithuanian community was expressed by 53,7 % researched children.

The above conclusions prove that the researched families on one hand present strong identification with Polish cultural heritage rooted in family socialisation and upbringing practices, but on the other – the awareness of being a citizen of Lithuania directs such processes concurrently towards Lithuanian cultural heritage. Therefore, within such range the following phenomena are present:

– providing positive examples of mutual recognition of diversity and tolerance, common compromises and respect towards culturally diverse values;

– upbringing and socialisation bringing individuals and groups together uniting them on the basis of both-sides profits of interaction emphasising common traits, assets and drawbacks of both groups consequently leading to identification with both cultures;

– socialisation and upbringing engaging both sides to apply the values represented by various groups concurrently preserving and cultivating own cultural diversity;

– socialisation and upbringing influences directed at preservation and cultivation of selected element of "own" group with concurrent introduction to exercise the culture of the majority group [9].

Ascertaining the above it may be concluded that experiencing cultural diversity of national provenance does not lead to cultural hermeticism whether within own cultural diversity or the majority community, but quite the contrary – mechanisms allowing one to work out such axio-normative order that would create sphere of "own" are launched naturally, allowing to familiarise with the cultural difference. Hence, it leads to expository multiculturalism as defined by Meilė Lukšienė, i.e. going through humanity – freedom – tolerance – democracy. [4]

Cultural obligations of education in Lithuania

The right to education is perceived as inalienable right of each human, with education considered from the perspective of indisputable general values such as freedom, moral responsibility, respect for the democratic system and attachment to tradition. Education oriented towards such priorities, in accordance with the assumption of the initiator of education reforms in Lithuania – Meilė Lukšienė, protects and shapes the national identities of students,

transmitting the values that provide meaning for human life, establishing citizenship attitudes, engaging for the sake of democratic state. Therefore, it should accomplish the following tasks:

1. shaping the set of values among children and teenagers enabling them to acquire knowledge, become independent, responsible and patriotic, developing communication competences enabling functioning in a knowledge-based society, learning languages – the mother's tongues, national and foreign languages; providing cognitive and social competences serving the idea of creating own educational path and life style;

2. developing creative skills among children and teenagers, enabling them to acquire professional competences making it possible to exits on a changeable job market that concurrently (within its range) would contain knowledge and skills corresponding with modern technological, economic and cultural solutions simultaneously contributing to the economic growth of a country stimulating permanent learning and lifelong improvement;

3. providing children and teenagers with competences enabling them to rationally manage natural resources in the future, protect natural environment, develop human resources, actively participate in national and international economic life, taking care of the security and democratic growth of the state;

4. shaping national awareness considering ethnic European cultures and global cultural traditions as well as humanistic values ensuring the completion of mature national, moral, aesthetic and cultural awareness, thanks to which it is possible for the nation and its cultural heritage to exist, shifting towards openness and dialogue in the cultural borderlands;

5. upbringing in democratic tradition involving citizenship as well as national culture within, providing experiences enabling one to become a citizen of Lithuania, Europe and the global community [10].

The above tasks altogether conceptualise cultural sphere within which the young generation is being prepared to function. Their range embraces this, what according to Meilė Lukšienė is symptomatic for the culture, i.e. all human activity, i.e. material, production, social and spiritual one as well as values that may become comprehended only after becoming aware of the continuity of a culture, its changeability in time with concurrent preservation of specific traits confirming its stabile nature, referred to as the national memory [4].

The cultural, particularly national-oriented education, is also expected by the researched parents, as all of them (100 %) emphasized that the language is the anchor of the "Polishness", as thanks to Polish language it is possible for the Polish cultural heritage to last and be transmitted (36.4 % of respondents). Therefore, education in Polish language is crucial, taking into account the right to Polish education (31.2 %). Schools guaranteeing the right to education in Polish language are perceived by the researched (both by parents and their children) as the main place of transmission of cultural heritage. As it is reflected in the percentage of responses, researched families expect the following components of cultural heritage to be transmitted in schools: events important in Polish history – 32.3 % adults, 82.3 % children; Polish art and literature – 38.7 % parents, 78 7 % children; biographies of distinguished Poles – 30.6 % parents, 65.2 % children, national songs – 27.4 % parents, 56 7 % children; Polish national symbols – 27.4 % parents, 43.9 % children. It must be emphasised that the researched parents, being open towards national diversity and appreciating such openness and establishing values such as respect for all cultures, tolerance and common good, are also oriented at education involving cultural diversity. Such expectations are strengthened by the fact that „cultural homogeneity is becoming more and more problematic: the »national« cultures constitute solely an element of the combination of cultures in which people participate due to various reasons" [11]. Therefore education should move beyond monocultural framework contributing to the establishment of multicultural system, democratically rooted in social practices of a multinational state.

Conclusion

Cultural self-identification in a situation of experiencing national diversity is, as the above reflections proved, multi-conditioned, however within multitude of factors socialisation and education are predominant. If such processes occur within multiculturalism and its specific axiology, they result in shaping multidimensional cultural identity of a young generation. Cultural heritage is concurrently a significant point of reference both in spontaneous and intentional practices of nationally diverse society, so functioning at the meeting point of cultures can become an everyday life reality.

Bibliography

1. Kubiszyn M. *Edukacja wielokulturowa w środowisku lokalnym*. Studia teoretyczno-empiryczne na przykładzie Ośrodka „Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN" w Lublinie, Toruń 2007, p. 21.
2. Sadowski A. Zróżnicowanie kulturowe a społeczeństwo obywatelskie. In: *Sprawy narodowościowe. Wokół wielokulturowości i multikulturalizmu*. Ed. J. W. Burszta, Warszawa 1999, p. 32–34.
3. Szerląg A. Młode pokolenie „międzyepoki" na przykładzie litewskiego pogranicza kulturowego. In: *Konflikt i dialog w wybranych społecznościach wielokulturowych*. Ed. A. Szerląg. Wrocław 2011, p. 161.
4. Barkauskeitė M., Tijūnėlienė O., Meilė Lukšienė – inicjatorka pookupacyjnej reformy oświatowej na Litwie i twórca jej koncepcji. In: *Wychowanie w rodzinie, Obrazy rodziny w ujęciu pedagogicznym i historycznym*. Ed. A. Szerląg, S. Walasek. Wrocław 2012, pp. 115–226.
5. Nikitorowicz J. *Edukacja regionalna i międzykulturowa*. Warszawa 2009, p. 226–227.
6. Tyszka A. Dziedzictwo kultury jako dowód tożsamości. In: *Edukacja kulturowa dzieci i młodzieży szkolnej. Koncepcje i propozycje*. Ed. S. Bednarek, E. Repsch. Wrocław 2004, pp. 23–24.
7. Budakowska E. Współczesne migracje a nowe wyzwania wobec identyfikacji narodowo – kulturowej. In: *Tożsamość bez granic. Współczesne wyzwania*. Ed. E. Budakowska. Warszawa 2005, p. 49.
8. Misiak W. Tożsamość a przyszłość postaw narodowych. In: *Tożsamość bez granic. Współczesne wyzwania*. Ed. E. Budakowska. Warszawa 2005, p. 83.
9. Nikitorowicz J. *Pogranicze. Tożsamość. Edukacja międzykulturowa*, Białystok 2001, pp. 58–60.
10. Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas 2011 m. kovo 17 d. Nr. XI-1281, Vilnius, pp. 1–4, 21–22, 58.
11. Wnuk-Lipiński E. *Świat międzyepoki. Globalizacja, demokracja, państwo narodowe*. Kraków 2004, p. 207.

Santrauka

Alicja Szerląg

MEILĖS LUKŠIENĖS PEDAGOGIKOS KULTŪRINIS KONTEKSTAS – INTEGRALUS KULTŪRINIO PAVELDO PERDAVIMAS VILNIAUS KRAŠTO LENKŲ ŠEIMOSE PER SOCIALIZACIJOS IR UGDYMO PROCESUS

Kultūrinė aplinka, pedagogės Meilės Lukšienės požiūriu, yra kultūrinio paveldo perdavimas iš kartos į kartą. To pavyzdys galėtų būti socializacija ir ugdymas Vilniaus krašte gyvenančių lenkų šeimos.

Šiuolaikinė kultūrų įvairovė sukūrė daugiatautę tradiciją nacionalinėse šalyse, taigi daugiakultūriškumas kaip savaime unikalus reiškinys turi savita sistemą, kurioje pagrindinė užduotis – žmogaus identiteto konceptualizavimas. Socializacija ir ugdymas yra pagrindinės sritys šiame procese, kaip ir savęs identifikavimas per paveldėtas tradicijas, kurios tuo pačiu metu sukuria ir naują – kultūrinį identitetą. Šiame kontekste kultūros interpretacija, pedagogės Meilės Lukšienės požiūriu, yra esminė siekiant orientuotis daugiakultūriame diskurse, kuriame ne visuomet vertinamos ypatybės.

Esminiai žodžiai: daugiakultūriškumas, nacionalinė įvairovė, kultūros paveldas, socializacija, ugdymas, kultūrinio tapatinimosi sritis, kultūros perdavimas iš kartos į kartą.