

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL RISKS OF POLYCULTURAL EDUCATION IN ARMENIA

Abstract

The article examines the features, opportunities and pedagogical risks of polycultural education in the educational environment of Armenia. It is substantiated that the problem of polyculturalism has long gone beyond the scope of its study in the context of a multinational region and is considered from the point of view of a culturological approach. Determining the characteristics and possibilities of polycultural education makes it necessary to take into account the undesirable consequences caused by the existing risks. The main risks of polycultural education are the following: strategic risks, personal risks, psychological risks, communication risks, sociocultural risks.

Keywords: *polycultural education, culturological approach, cultural dialogue, cultural development of a person, pedagogical risks, sociocultural risks.*

Introduction

In recent decades, the problem of human coexistence in a multinational, multicultural, diverse world has acquired particular relevance and demand. Migration, emerging new communication systems, increasing economic and cultural interdependence of societies lead to the unification of humankind. This important factor cannot but influence the education system. Moreover, taking into account the modern realities, modernisation processes, the inevitability of globalisation in various spheres of life, the development strategy of the education system dictates new requirements for the system. Therefore, the task of strategic importance for the education system is to include the polycultural component in the development of the education system.

However, in fairness, it should be noted that polycultural education as a strategic task of the development of the education system is not the only factor that actualizes the polycultural component in the education system. Migration processes can also be added to the above-mentioned.

Another important factor of the relevance of polycultural education in Armenia is the culturological approach to this problem since, in multicultural education, we are talking about the interaction of cultures, about the dialogue between cultures (M.M. Bakhtin) [1],

about the cultural development of a person (Vygotskij L.S., Luriya A.R., 1993).

This actualizes the need for the formation of a new polycultural way of thinking, the search for new ways of intercultural interaction, which is not only one of the effective means of the positive and purposeful organisation of ethnocultural processes in society, a means of integrating the education system into the global educational space, but also a task of state priority (Gevorkyan M.M., Gevorkyan A.M., 2016).

The relevance and necessity of the problem of polycultural education in a multinational region are obvious, and the problem is quite actively, multidimensionally studied in the works of Western and Russian scientists.

However, in the conditions of a monoethnic region, such as Armenia, polycultural education as an urgent psychological and pedagogical issue is accepted ambiguously, and sometimes even in a hostile manner. The reason lies in the well-established contradictory opinion that polycultural education will hinder the formation of national self-awareness and national identity of the younger generation. However, such an approach to the upbringing of a person in a multicultural, diverse world is completely unjustified, since one of the factors that positively influence, contribute to polycultural upbringing and the dialogue between cultures is a sense of national identity, awareness of belonging to a certain culture, ethnicity. Thus, the questions referring to the assumption that polycultural dialogue can alienate young people from their national roots (our young people are already on the verge of integration, assimilation with a 'foreign' cultural environment, they can easily forget their historical roots) are unjustified and unlikely. On the contrary, in the context of globalisation processes, a polycultural dialogue helps to turn to one's own culture, and the comparison 'ours versus someone else's' encourages people to understand and evaluate their culture, historical past and present in a new way.

Determination of the features and possibilities of polycultural education makes it necessary to take into account the undesirable consequences caused by existing risks. 'Risk is a constant and irremovable component of any human activity, both constructive and destructive, which requires adaptation of a person to a risk-generating environment. The "risk" category is structural and includes the situation of risk; risk assessment; the degree of its awareness of risk subjects; risk factors; the situation of choice; risk boundaries and risk zone' (Kopylova N.V., 2008).

The pedagogical risks of multicultural education are all unforeseen reactions and manifestations that contain an explicit or hidden danger of implementing the tasks of polycultural education.

Our studies have allowed us to identify and substantiate the following risks of

polycultural education, taking into account the ethnic composition of the region and the possibilities of polycultural dialogue:

1. Strategic risks - a strategy for the development of the education system, taking into account modern realities, modernisation processes, the inevitability of globalisation in different spheres of life. The task of strategic importance for the education system is to include a polycultural component in educational standards at all levels of education.

2. Personal risks - the readiness of the subjects of the education system to interact in a polycultural educational space. Personal risks are considered in two ways: on the one hand, the teacher's conscious readiness to organise the educational process, taking into account the polycultural factor. On the other hand, there is a readiness among students for the multicultural dialogue.

3. Psychological risks - associated with the difficulties of transition from monocultural to multicultural thinking. These difficulties are associated with misunderstanding, inconsistency with cultural norms, values, the contradiction in the relationship between one's own and foreign in the context of culture, which can cause a cultural shock, different degrees of manifestation of ethnocentrism, etc. As for the difficulties encountered, it is important to determine their cause, the circumstances of the encounter, as well as the subject-object and subject-subject context of the difficulties. For example, it is one thing when difficulties arise in the process of interethnic communication, in particular, when the respondent was unable to overcome emotions, feelings, and showed special behavioural responses. The situation is completely different if difficulties arose in the process of subject-object interaction while watching a movie, a social video or while listening to ethnic music of other peoples. Therefore, the reason, for which the difficulties have arisen and which has become the reason for the emergence of a risky situation, is of key importance.

4. Communicative risks are associated with communication skills and the willingness of the individual to interact in society. In the polycultural educational space, the problem of intercultural communication and the formation of intercultural communicative competence comes to the fore. In this aspect, different forms of risks can be distinguished:

- risks associated with the lack of knowledge of foreign languages, in this case, the native language (in our case, Armenian) is the main communicative language, which complicates the process of integration of the individual into the global educational environment.

- risks associated with the problem of bilingualism, most often the Russian language,

although it is not uncommon to come across knowledge of Armenian and English.

- risks associated with the interactive, perceptual, empathic aspects of intercultural communication in a polycultural educational space.

5. Sociocultural risks. Sociocultural risks as a derivative of social risks. Social risks in general terms are considered as: 'Human activity or refusal from it in the situation of risk (choice, uncertainty (which are typical of any sphere of life)), requiring him/her to assess his/her own actions, develop the necessary social qualities, as well as consideration and regulation of the impact of social factors, under the influence of which the likelihood of a negative impact on the life of people remains, the consequences of which can negatively affect the life and health of people' (Kopylova N.V., 2008). In the context of social risks, the problem of socio-cultural identification within the framework of polycultural education is of particular importance for us. According to V.A. Ershov and I.D. Lelchitsky, 'The task of socio-cultural identification within the framework of polycultural education involves the formation of national and cultural self-awareness, based both on the values of respect for other ethnic communities and the desire to understand their characteristics, and the ability to study them critically' (Ershov V.A., Lelchitsky A.D., 2008). In the context of social risks, we especially emphasize the consideration of the polycultural factor in the activities of social institutions, in particular families and schools. We especially want to emphasize the role of the family, since the family, together with relatives, neighbours, religious communities, ethnos, is the primary reference group, it performs a number of functions and bears a certain responsibility. First, in the family, the primary stage of socialization of the personality takes place, which means that the 'first encounter' of the child with culture takes place in the family. The way the 'interaction of the child and culture' will be 'organised' will serve as a basis for the further dialogue of cultures (according to M.M. Bakhtin) (Bahtin M.M., 1986) and the further cultural development of the child (according to L.S. Vygotsky) (Vygotskij L.S., Luriya A.R., 1993). This means that the level of cultural development of the family is also important. Following L.S. Vygotsky, who puts forward the concept of childish primitiveness, we tend to put forward the concept of a primitive family as a special form of underdevelopment, that is, a delay in cultural development. The next important point is the ethnocultural factor of the family. As it is known, by ethnic composition, families are monoethnic and polyethnic. But from the point of view of the polycultural factor, all families are polycultural, even if all family members belong to the same ethnic group. The reason is that two individuals from different families, different socio-cultural environment, who have gone through different paths of cultural development are united by marriage and

build a family. The new family constitutes a new unit of society, forming its own path of development in it. Consequently, each family is essentially polycultural, therefore, the process of family education must necessarily take into account the polycultural factor.

Another aspect of sociocultural risks is sociocultural adaptation. Sociocultural adaptation is a complex multidimensional process of the interaction of a person with a new socio-cultural environment, during which a person belonging to the same social and cultural environment, having specific ethnopsychological characteristics, must (forcedly or arbitrarily) overcome all kinds of psychological, moral, cultural, religious barriers, enter into a dialogue with representatives of the 'other', 'alien' culture, to master new types of activities and forms of behaviour.

T. Londadzhim considers socio-cultural adaptation as a form of interaction between the subject and the sphere of everyday life, which creates the conditions for the subject to effectively enter the society and master various forms of social activity. Its content is the development of new, non-standard situations in everyday life, and the result is mutual adaptation, compatibility and exchange of products of the activity of the individual and the environment (T'erri Londadzhim, 2011). It should be noted that this process includes both adaptation and resistance, both self-change and desire to change the environment. Even with favourable conditions and positive motivation, adaptation to a new sociocultural environment is a difficult and stressful process.

We should note that the problem of socio-cultural adaptation in a multicultural educational space is considered in many aspects in foreign scientific thought, and it is associated, first of all, with the adaptation of migrant children to new social conditions, as well as with the adaptation of foreign students studying in Russian and other universities. However, it is also more expedient to consider the problem of socio-cultural adaptation in the context of the monoethnic educational space.

In a polyethnic environment, the interethnic interaction is a natural process, and the teacher only needs to take into account the peculiarities of the multinational region in teaching and educational work, as well as to emphasize the national characteristics of the subjects of the educational process. When it comes to a monoethnic educational environment, where the ethnic composition of students is limited to one nationality, and national minorities make up a small percentage of the number of students (for example, like Armenia), the peculiarities of the multinational region lose their relevance. In this case, the teacher can only artificially create a polycultural situation through games, dialogues, problem-based lectures, extracurricular activities, comparisons between 'own' and 'foreign' in the context of culture, etc. If in a polyethnic educational space a cultural

shock arises in natural conditions and is dictated by the peculiarities of a multinational region, in a monoethnic educational space, a situation of cultural shock is created artificially.

Thus, identifying the features, opportunities and risks of multicultural education in the modern world will help to take into account the cultural and educational interests of representatives of different nationalities and ethnic groups, which, on the one hand, will be of strategic importance in the competitiveness of educational institutions in the context of education mobility and the transition of universities to the international level. On the other hand, the identification of effective ways and mechanisms of prevention or ways and technologies for minimising the occurrence and development of risks in a modern multicultural space will make the process of personality development in a modern multicultural, diverse world more harmonious and more holistic.

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