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PECULIARITIES OF INTERNATIONALIZING SCHOOL EDUCATION IN REGARDS TO DIVERSITY

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Abstract

The article dwells on internationalization of secondary schools in Russia. Nowadays this process is unfolding in the situation of growing number of migrants coming to different regions of Russia. The article addresses the current tendency when a deep respect to internationalization is neighboring still not very clearly articulated position towards diversity and inclusion. Observations show that Russian children have more negative stereotypes about migrants from Central Asia than about people from Europe or USA. Working over inclusive and diversity friendly environment is an important task for secondary schools which can help their pupils and their parents to challenge and change attitudes about other cultures and nationalities and thus create internationalized atmosphere on the level of secondary education. In Russia there are many schools that are active in internationalization sphere and teach foreign languages. Due to the changing migration situation schools start developing an ethno-cultural profile, giving preference to teaching migrants' children Russian language, national and regional culture thus serving the purposes of ensuring equity and diversity.

Keywords: Diversity, ethno-cultural school, internationalization of education, migrant children, secondary education.

1. Introduction

Extending to virtually all aspects of education, internationalization of education penetrates all levels of educational programs, technologies, assessment and quality control systems. Internationalization is acknowledged throughout the world as an important strategy and multi-approach relationship. Since educational institutions exist both in a global and a national context, they face different competitive and institutional pressures. Though the majority of developed countries emphasize the importance of internationalization in their educational policy, nevertheless, they primarily consider their own national interests, as well as the needs and capabilities of their educational systems which do not necessarily coincide with currently articulated global concerns and needs (Fillippov, 2015; Marginson, 2006).

In the globalized environment social groups are closely connected but at the same time they persistently try to preserve and concentrate on their localized identities. However, as Mitchell and Nielsen note (2016, p. 8), "the national communities get more pluralized, cultural and economic differences can form divisions among the people who share the same locality". Dealing with local, national and global concerns, internationalization has become very closely related to issues of diversity, though internationalization is not very often mentioned within diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) discourse.

As Osturgut (2017) states, diversity is inherent to internationalization and internationalization is ultimately about integrating international, global, or intercultural content into all aspects of the teaching, research, and services functions of an educational institution. It is not a separate construct but internationalization framework takes the DEI vision from local to global (p. 89).

Describing the US education, Shust underlined (2009) the gap that existed between local and global interests within the United States and argued that the focus on diversity was caused by the need of colleges and universities to address "the growing presence and significance of racial, ethnic, and other types of cultural diversity, whereas, internationalization sprang from the need for institutions to address the growing interrelatedness of peoples around the world" (p. 18).

Analyzing the policy of several American universities in regards to internationalization and diversity, Osturgut (2017) points out that American exceptionalism (product of global dominance of the United States) creates disconnection between internationalization and diversity. This disconnection and sometimes tension may stem from theoretical and philosophical viewpoints that underpin diversity and internationalization or from simple matters, such a resource allocation. They are rarely seen as interrelated topics but often viewed as separate conversations and responsibilities falling on separate and specific offices on campuses.

Considering the educational environment in Russia, one can notice the opposite tendency, where a deep respect to internationalization is neighboring still not very clearly articulated position towards diversity and inclusion. Teachers and students of different educational institutions in Russia try to enhance the international context in different types of cooperation in order to strengthen peace, mutual understanding and friendship between people in the period of political tensions between states. Widely recognized and officially supported is grassroots movement in internationalization of education. However,

the idea of internationalization is mostly associated with people representing either European countries or America or some "exotic" and remote countries.

In spite of the fact that inclusion has become the official strategy of Russian state and government, compulsory for Russian schools and educational institutions, educational community displays neutral or even hostile attitudes towards diversity and inclusion. Sociological study of the problems of inclusive education conducted in 2014 in the Russian city of Vologda, a middle-sized regional center, showed the inertial thinking of teachers and parents, their misunderstanding of the importance of inclusion in the educational system, the substitution of the concept of "inclusion" for partial "integration" into society (Balashova, Tikhomirova, & Shadrova, 2014). Observations show that Russian children have more negative stereotypes about migrants from Central Asia and the regions of Caucasus than about people from Europe or USA. Pupils in primary and secondary schools often consider migrants from these parts of the world as potential criminals and people who don't want to respect national values, traditions and beliefs of local population. It is obvious that children perceive the prevailing moods and assessments in their families thus learning prejudice and xenophobia based on false stereotypes (Pevzner, Rakhkochkine, Shirin, & Shaydorova, 2019).

In the research on internationalization of schools in national systems of education (Kotzyba, Dreier, Niemann, & Helsper, 2018) there are attempts to classify different internationalization profiles. In line with such considerations, (Pevzner, Rakhkochkine, Shirin, & Shaydorova, 2019) single out three types of schools with international profiles in Russia: the global competitiveness type, the human-oriented type, and the language-oriented type. This classification is based on goals of internationalization. Withal, there is another type of school emerging that can be considered a school with international profile – an ethno-cultural school or a school with ethno-cultural profile (component) (Balabas, 2013). Such schools appear mostly in large cities with a large inflow of migrants, but in middle-size cities of Russia there are attempts to introduce ethno-cultural component thus considering the interests of migrants and their children.

2. Problem Statement

At present internationalization of education and managing diversity should be regarded as closely interconnected processes, since more and more people with different ethnic religious and cultural background are coming to work and study in Russia. Russian Federation implements the State Program for promoting unforced migration of compatriots to the Russian Federation in line with the Presidential Decree No. 637 of June 22, 2006. The main objective of the program is to help promoting the socio-economic development of regions and solving demographic problems by attracting migrants to a permanent place of residence in the Russian Federation, first of all to the territories of priority settlement.

Besides the state supported programs, there is a stream of migrants coming to Russia and bringing their families with children in order to secure better life. The vast majority of them represent the countries which were once parts of Soviet Union. The so-called CIS countries occupy leading positions in the export structure of Russian education: they comprise more than half (54%) of the total number of foreign students who come to Russia to study. They are also the main suppliers of foreign students for secondary vocational education institutions (Brylyakova, 2017).

The issues of interrelation between internationalization, diversity and inclusion become acute in regards to children of migrants. Russian schools as heterogeneous institutions dealing with ethnical, religious and cultural diversity strive to prevent and solve conflicts between different social and ethnic groups. The authors of the article suggest that, working over inclusive and diversity friendly environment is an important task for schools which can help their pupils and their parents to challenge and change attitudes about other cultures and nationalities and thus create internationalized atmosphere on the level of secondary education. According to de Witt, entering the next level of education teenagers and young adults will be better prepared for accepting and interacting with people of other ethnic and cultural background through meaningful collaborations both inside and outside of the classroom. (de Witt, 2011, as cited in Urban & Palmer, 2013, p. 307).

3. Research Questions

In order to reflect on the best strategy for creating internationalized atmosphere on the level of secondary education, it is essential to contemplate on the following questions:

▪ What international profiles are most common in schools of a middle-sized Russian city of Veliky Novgorod?

▪ To what extent the schools under study are internationalized in regards to intercultural diversity

▪ In what way the schools consider the growing number of migrants and foster the intercultural competence of all participants of educational process?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose is to define the most common types of schools with an international profile that exist in a middle-sized Russian city of Veliky Novgorod and to see the ways the city schools foster the migrant children in the context of pedagogy of diversity.

5. Research Methods

The research is based on the metatheory of diversity which stems out of theoretical heritage of scientists from the USA and countries of Western Europe, due to the active international project activity, in which Russia and other countries of Eastern Europe are actively involved. The theory of diversity is based on transdisciplinary methodological strategy. Methodological strategy in this case, is considered as a system of priority methodological installations and dominant methodological tools for solving problems of diversity. In accordance with post-nonclassical science, the metatheory of diversity presents "a transition from an interdisciplinary approach to a transdisciplinary level of interaction not only between specific scientific disciplines (for example, pedagogy and management), but also the study of the phenomenon of diversity in society, economy, culture and science in general and in education in particular" (Kolesnikova, 2014).

Pedagogy of diversity singles out several approaches to cultural diversity. Pluralistic approach is aimed at the preservation of cultural diversity within the framework of one community, at the formation of

harmonious relations between children belonging to different ethnic cultures frames with pedagogical means. The dialogue approach to cultural diversity is not only connected with internal factors (interethnic relations within the framework of one country), but also with external factors of multiculturalism development (integration into the pan-European and world community). In pedagogical terms, this approach requires creating the system of education based on a cultural pluralism and dialogue of cultures. An inclusive approach to cultural diversity which appeared due to the negative effects of multiculturalism in many countries of the world is aimed at inclusion, integrating ethnic minorities in the mainstream culture, which is reflected in the system of methods of interaction with children belonging to different educational minorities (Pevsner & Petryakov, 2016, p. 7).

The research methods included literature review and analysis of a case study of schools in a medium-size regional center of Russia.

6. Findings

In the period of 1993-2012, Novgorod Region located in the North-Western part of Russia was considered predominantly migration attractive with positions higher than average in the overall ranking of subjects of the Russian Federation for this indicator. Regarding other regions in the rating of attractiveness, it occupied 27th position behind Kaliningrad, Leningrad, Tver, Murmansk and Moscow regions, but it is ahead of such regions as Pskov, Vologda, Yaroslavl regions and the Republic of Karelia (Vasilenko, 2016). Migrants are mostly coming to Novgorod region from Tajikistan, Ukraine, Moldova, and Uzbekistan which corresponds to all-Russian tendency (Some indices of migration…, 2019).

The Governor of the Novgorod region, Andrey Nikitin, initiated the priority regional project "Improving the Migration Situation in the Novgorod Region". The initiative is aimed at overcoming by 2022 the decline in population and ensuring by 2025 a migration increase of at least 500 people. The project should have a positive impact on the problem of demography and fill the human resource shortage, as the regional Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population notes. It is planned to overcome the migration decline in the region through the integrated development of the agglomeration of Veliky Novgorod and the Novgorod region in cooperation with the business community. By the year of 2025, with the successful implementation of all directions of the priority regional project, 44575 people should move in for permanent residence in the urban agglomeration of Veliky Novgorod and the Novgorod region. The plans include attracting compatriots living abroad, as well as young people from other regions of Russia and foreign countries to get education at Novgorod State University with further employment in the region (To the year…, 2019).

In 2016, 1788 migrants from former parts of Soviet Union came to Novgorod region, out of which 939 people represented Ukraine, 230 were from Uzbekistan, 177 - from Tajikistan. In 2017, this tendency continued: among 1456 migrants there were 610 migrants from Ukraine, 226 – from Tajikistan, 157 – from Uzbekistan (Zimina, 2017; Zimina, 2018).Unlike migrants from Ukraine who do not require any special help in mastering Russian language, migrants from Central Asia usually have problems in adaptation due to low level of Russian language knowledge. This disadvantage strongly affects both the attitude of the Russian-speaking population towards migrants and their children and the learning process itself.

An exploratory study was carried out in regards to 34 municipal public schools of Veliky Novgorod (Russia). According to open-access information, among these 34 schools there are nine schools with specific title names (4 schools with the title status "Gimnazia", 5 schools with other specific title names - "Harmony", "Novoskul", "Istok", "Evrika", "Kvant") well-known in the city as highly selective and streaming the students according to certain subjects studied deeper than others. In the city there are also four schools with announced "in-depth study of subjects". Though only one school announces in-depth study of English language in its title, all of 13 above-mentioned schools provide expanded educational services in the sphere of foreign languages (mostly English and German) which is clearly seen from compulsory curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Language-oriented type is widely spread in Veliky Novgorod secondary schools; it corresponds to all-Russian tendency reported by Pevzner et al. Veliky Novgorod schools of the language-oriented type have partner schools in various countries of the world: China, Poland, Germany, United States, Sweden, Finland, etc. This partnership includes schools either from the partner cities of Veliky Novgorod or cities which have contacts through public bodies, NGOs, or local citizens. Though the schools foster the intercultural competence of all participants of educational process, none of these schools openly reported on some special programs or specific activities connected with raising awareness of students and their parents in regards to migrants or ethnic minorities living in the city.

Only one school in the city could correlate with the status of a school with an ethno-cultural component. It does not belong to the above-mentioned group of schools with "title names" and is considered an average secondary city school. In 2016 Municipal Autonomous Educational Institution (MAEI) "Secondary School No. 23" organized, as part of additional education, the "Center for Russian Language and Russian Culture", the main purpose of which is to support and develop the Russian language and Russian culture, to ensure social and cultural adaptation of migrant children in Veliky Novgorod, to carry out systemic activities to ensure the implementation of programs in the Russian language, to promote the popularization of the Russian language, to promote a culture of speech for the development of linguistic intercultural competences of students in Veliky Novgorod (Centre of Russian…, 2019).

The Center of the Russian language and Russian culture of MAEI "Secondary School No. 23" invites migrant children from different schools of the city to its classes. Children could learn the culture of the Novgorod land and the Russian language, participate in the theatre performances, and sing in chorus. In 2017 31 children from migrant families received additional training at the Center.

The above-mentioned school No 23 does not belong to a group of highly performing Novgorod schools which select pupils and often do not accept migrant children due to their low results or the inabilities of their parents to cope with bureaucratic obstacles appearing during the school enrollment process. Less effective schools are used to working with children from dysfunctional, incomplete, poor families, with children with antisocial behavior. The category of "problem" students usually includes migrant children.

To support the school initiative and give it the further impulse for development, the city authorities together with Novgorod State University developed a draft concept of joint activities aimed at ensuring the social and cultural adaptation of migrant children in all educational institutions of Veliky Novgorod, at coordinating events aimed at teaching the Russian language to migrant children, at developing awareness of the languages and culture of the peoples of the Russian Federation living in Veliky Novgorod, as well

as providing methodological support to the Center of the Russian Language and Russian Culture of secondary school No. 23 by Department of Russian as a Foreign Language of NovSU.

So far MAEI "Secondary School No. 23" remains the only educational institution in Veliky Novgorod which assumed the position of a city "hub" for giving children of migrants the chance to smooth adaptation to a new social and educational environment. Other schools are not so eager to start such activities.

7. Conclusion

The study of schools in Veliky Novgorod shows that internationalization of schools consider territorial conditions to a certain degree. In regional centres, which are usually middle-sized cities with population about 200000 people, schools with visible international activities usually focus on the advanced study of foreign languages and cooperation with schools from Europe and the USA. At the same time, due to the changing migration situation in those cities, schools start developing an ethno-cultural profile, promoting Russian language education, national and local culture among children of migrants thus serving the purposes of ensuring equity and diversity in the territory. But in spite of the fact that regional authorities' policy requires more activities in adaptation and inclusion of migrants into social environment, this tendency is far from being widely spread in secondary schools.

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