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THE EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE DIALOGUE IN MULTIETHNIC ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract: *The topic of this paper is the theoretical research of dialogue in the educational system and its importance for reaching a higher level of socio-cultural unity in multiethnic environments. The goal of this research, as the authors see it, is researching the educational possibilities for enhancing dialogue as a method for learning, communication and self-change, which should eventually lead to improvements in the collective spirit and consequently the common good. Their theoretical view is based on the knowledge that cultural, religious, linguistic and other differences should be points of mutual connection and acceptance, and not of divergence, alienation and exclusion. In this work the postulated thesis is that dialogue which is founded on respect for others and their differences represents a sound moral basis for creative progress of individual in freedom and responsibility. Having this in mind the authors, with a wide scientific, theological and philosophical basis, developed the argumentation with which they confirm the codependence of sensitivity and care for others with personal moral development.*

Key words: *dialogue, education, multiethnic environment, culture*

In the context of the selected topic the authors study the phenomenon of dialogue, its place in the educational system and its influence on multiethnic environments. The topic will be explored through the theological, philosophical and socio-historical approach. The starting basis for the analysis is the differentiation between dialogue as a dialogue method and means of communication on the basis of which the analysis of these tow functions is formed: epistemological and ethic which is expressed in the educational process and socio-cultural effect which affirms itself in the communication and interaction role in multiethnic environments.

The principle assumptions

The skill of holding dialogues while respecting diversity should constantly be developed on the one hand by overcoming violence and on the other devaluing it. Then anyone can become successful – "big" in the extent to which one allows others to develop in their creative freedom. Unfortunately, in all of its currents history is a witness to the fact that people are starting to "talk more and more, but communicating less and less… there are too many professionals for holding speeches, but people are still beginners at having a conversation" (Šupnjić, 1994:9-10). This knowledge should not discourage us and freeze us in the state of established diagnosis; we should form stable foundations for the culture of dialogue in the multi pluralistic society of our time and region on the basis of the dialogue success examples form history. Multidisciplinary education system, multiethnic, multicultural and multi-religious society represent a creative phenomenon. They require creative innovation which brings to the present all of the achievements from the past and all creative insight and roles for the future.

Epistemological and ethical dimensions of the dialogue method:

In the research of the epistemological dimension of the dialogue method, the authors started from the authentic dialogue form which Socrates introduced and developed. It entails the participation of two actors: the student, who engages in dialogue with a need to learn the truth and the teacher, who has mastered the skill of logically and methodologically leading a dialogue. Through this form of dialogue multiple learning effects are achieved:

1. The understanding of what we know and what we do not know, by the principle "I do not think I know what I do not know" (Socrates)
2. The understanding of false knowledge or until then false conviction about knowledge
3. Release from conceited knowledge
4. Establishing a safe starting position for thinking and gaining true knowledge
5. The readiness to recognize the collocutors argumentation

Apart from this form of dialogue in which the collocutor directly through conversation develops the consciousness of borders and possibilities of one's own thinking, the teacher can by correctly leading the conversation prepare the student for self-dialogue, in which the internal awareness develops the consciousness of one's personality, identity, preferences, freedoms and possibilities. A person engrossed in oneself feels the need for others as cocreators and collocutors, who becomes "…the unknown self… then within me develops a new person with every encounter" (Šušnjić, 1994:2016). Viewed from this aspect dialogue incorporates not only the learning but also the moral dimension, because confronting oneself and ones characteristics, the good along with the ones which indicate weaknesses and inadequacies, created the need for development and personal change. Such an actor in conversation becomes freed from:

1. Underestimating the collocutor
2. Persuading and imposing one's own views onto others
3. Eristic (quarrelsome) attitude
4. Disqualification

The socio-cultural dimension of dialogue

When dialogue understood in such a way is applied in the system of interpersonal relations it contributes to its improvement. The principle of difference which is on a personal level discovered through the presence of personal gifts which people develop throughout their lives, on a social level in multiethnic surroundings this principle is recognized through the character of entities who are characterized by a different: language, culture, traditions, customs, histories and religion. This is indicated by the following: "If I can help you, I believe I can do so primarily by being different from you" (Žid, 1961:219). Difference in this way becomes creative capital of many, it is constantly expanding with the self-giving of each individual, as the best role which forms the capital of: socially free and dependable citizens. This should be recognized as a combined goal of all good-natured creators, who can develop only when "… no one conjures reasons for self-justification, everyone is good-willed and honest to others" (Stojanović, 2013:183).

The main importance of dialogue as a communication form in social interaction is affirmation of the socio-cultural values, the development of tolerance, moral sensitivity, altruism, care for others and solidarity with others. This entails constant effort from all participants, who know that "…questioning is always a sign of tolerance" (Šunjić, 1994:218). It is also important to know that "… in a dispute over an answer to a question the battle should not be waged on a race track, because speed does not win but truth" (Kjerkegor, 1980:51). Dialogue founded on these values contributes to:

1. Accepting others in their differences
2. Allowing the freedom of thinking, speech and action
3. Refraining from judging others in advance
4. Not judging someone as a bad person on the basis of a bad act, if an "evil intention" is missing

As an end result, a dialogue built on healthy, moral and social foundations enables the cultivation of community spirit, the development of a tendency of finding the good in others, encourages empathy and contributes to a continual development of a person's freedom and responsibility. It should be noted that the goal of education, especially in the age of swift technological development, is to "…guide the technological and scientific development towards the values of critical reflection, solidarity and creativity, global interest and the wellbeing of all" (Inđić, 2009:83).

Historical indicators of dialogue culture in Banat

Banat as an example of a peace-loving creative coexistence of differences, with its historical persistence in searching for and finding good dialogue forms,

represents a formula for success in achieving unity in difference. This was an obvious reality, long before the modern declarative advocacy in the world started, and has been acting without any real results. Multi-ethnicity, multiculturalism and multi-confessionality in Banat have been nurtured throughout centuries because the dialogue culture has been continually developing. An indicator of this are the multilingual schools which have existed from the very beginning of the Habsburg Monarchy educational system in the 18thcentury, in which Banat was a constituent part. This is confirmed by the existence of the Grammar school in Vršac, whose founder was the municipality of Vršac, in which the educational languages were: Serbian, Romanian and German but where Latin was also taught (milker, 2005:196-197). In addition to this we should mention the existence of the Serbian-Romanian clerical school (1822-1867) in Vršac, where future priests were schooled both in Serbian and Romanian (Gavrilivić, 1983). An interesting event is the signing of the Yugoslav-Romanian school convention in the year 1933. which enabled the opening of elementary schools in the Romanian language, as well as a Romanian class in the Teacher Training school in Vršac, along with a Serbian class in the Grammar high school and Teacher Training school in Timisoara (Popi, 1976:100-103). When it comes to the modern day higher education it should be said that at the Teacher Training College "Mihailo Palov" in Vršac students are educated in three languages Serbian, Romanian and Roma. This data indicates a high level of cooperation and it encourages innovative creative activities.

Concluding thoughts

From the short theoretical insight and concrete historical facts we can freely conclude that acceptance of differences represents the founding stone on which pluralistic society is built. School on all of its educational levels from the preschool to the higher education represents the most important dialogue space. This is why it is essential for everyone to have an opportunity to be educated in their mother tongue, with the presumed necessity of learning the language of one's fellow citizens from a different nationality. This is how common capital of all citizens is formed, since everyone feels richer for learning the language of his neighbor, who has also learned your language. Everyone rises to a higher level of understanding of the importance of the mother tongue precisely by allowing the other to have the same rights.

Harmonization of differences as a creative phenomenon is possible only when people succeed in putting their own origin and nationality in the creative context with the origin and nationality of others. In this way the selfishness of the individual and collective is overcome while identity and collective dignity are promoted. This is when differences are experienced as a good opportunity which needs to be continually developed, and not be perceived as a threat. Awareness of the fact that no one can endanger us as much as we can endanger ourselves encourages one to realistically rethink the relation between oneself and others.

Taking this into consideration we realize that violence and discrimination represent weakness and ignorance of those who promote them. Tolerance is then recognized as a life necessity but also as something which should be continually cared for until it develops into the fullness of a healthy philanthropy

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