

PEDAGOGY

The European Vector of School Education Content Transformations in Ukraine**O.I. Lokshyna, O.M. Shparyk, A.P. Dzhurylo***

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to the substantiation of the positive expertise of the primary education development in the European countries with the projection at the primary school modernization in Ukraine. The author pays attention at the foreign prospective ideas for the national primary education under the condition of its European focus.

Keywords: *primary school, content of education, the European countries, comparative analysis, transformations*

Problem statement and topicality of the study. In independent Ukraine, primary education development is featured by dynamics and correlation with the tendencies of the primary education development in foreign countries, in particularly, in the European states; this process is influenced by such common challenges as globalization, active ICT implementation, reinforcement of the cultural interpenetration. For the purpose of these challenges resistance, the countries are focused on the large-scale governmental, organizational, and content transformations. Significant theoretical lay-outs of European scholars as well as their expertise which has been gained in this area are valuable for the further evolvement of the Ukrainian primary education in the process of European integration.

Analysis of latest studies and publications. Foreign countries expertise in the primary education area is covered in the works of such Ukrainian comparativists as I. Borysenko (primary education content in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), O. Voloshyna (social and cultural component of the future primary school teachers' education), L. Zablotska (didactic fundamentals of the pupils' linguistic education in primary school), O. Kashuba (organization and content of education in German primary schools), O. Mokromenko (primary education development in Great Britain), M. Popyuk (primary education in V4 Visegrad Countries), M. Shabinskyi (up-bringing primary schoolchildren in France), O. Yarova (primary education development in EU states), and others. Abovementioned researches as well as other comparative pedagogy studies that coincide with the foreign primary education challenges are valuable for the homeland pedagogical theory and school under the conditions of its modernization.

The purpose of the article is aimed at the popularization of the comparative studies that cover foreign primary school in Ukraine. The article purpose is to demonstrate the direction as well as the features of the primary education development, in particularly, education content in Europe comparing with the Ukrainian one in order to find out the prospects for the Ukrainian education.

Description of the main material. In accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education adopted in 2011 (ISCE), primary education belongs to the level ISCE 1 which is considered to be the first basic education level aimed at the formation of the pupils' fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics, lay the basis for the further education and personal development

[11]. Such guides characterize the primary education purpose all over the world, including Ukraine. At the same time, at the modern stage there are complex transformations at the primary school level in the European states caused by global changes. In particularly, in management, some changes which are aimed at ensuring more independence for the primary schools are made in the decentralization area. In practice, they are implemented by means of providing schools much more authority that is exercised by a headmaster/a school council in the management of the financial and other kinds of school resources (staff, premises, equipment, materials) in the case of its financing as a separate institution; adoption of the curriculums, educational programs, teaching methodologies, didactic materials, home assignments policy, cultural and sports events (in the framework of the national/regional standards); making decisions on the school life organization (timetable, division of the academic year into terms and academic hours proportioning between subjects/subject areas); selection and recruitment of teachers and other staff including their salary calculation as well as providing labour conditions in accordance with the procedures which correspond to the national legislation; making reports on the school achievements and the problems which are revealed by means of the internal assessment (self-assessment) and the external evaluation of the educational institution activity.

The other group of transformations deals with the educational process optimization by means of the pupils amount decrease in the classes, academic week restructuring for the purpose of making Saturdays free and increasing academic workload on other five working days; academic year restructuring in the area of more equal duration of terms and holidays; primary education division into periods (cycles, stages) aimed at more accurate structuring of the educative purposes, content, outlining learning outcomes and the corresponding assessment tools development for the certain period of time.

At the level ISCE 1, the most large-scale transformations are experienced by the education content; actually, systematic changes which comprise the approaches to its selection, transmission means, and acquisition assessment are made in it. The conducted analysis makes it possible to find out those areas of the primary education content transformation which are common for Ukraine and other countries. They include the reinforcement of the sequence between the pre-school and the primary educa-

tion; transforming the primary education content into competence basis; the orientation at the development of the pupils' learning outcomes concept in the area of the active interplay between a teacher and a pupil.

The reinforcement of the sequence between the pre-school and the primary education in Ukraine is correlated by the common European tendencies in making an emphasis on the nursery and "pre-school" education in the EU states. Such position of the member-states is based on the results of the numerous researches which confirm the direct link between children's pre-school education and the economic as well as the social success of the country:

- children's nursery education of high quality has a considerable positive impact in future; it was emphasized in the Statement of the European Commission to the European Council and European Parliament "Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems" (2006): pupils who have studied before going to school demonstrate the higher level of academic outcomes and social success in the process of studying at a secondary school as well as the rapid career progress than their coevals. It was proved that the enhanced orientation of the pre-school education to the problematic population stratum (the poor, migrants) as well as the children with special needs promotes the additional social and economic profit in future [4, p. 8];
- the results of the research "Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities" confirm that the pre-school education of high quality intensifies obtaining the skills in speaking, reading, mathematics, natural sciences, social competences, the ability to learn by the junior schoolchildren [6];
- children who have studied before going to school demonstrate better results in the international comparative researches on the quality of the pupils' knowledge in comparison with their coevals who have not attended any infant schools. The researches of the European Commission "Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe" (2014) confirmed considerable success of this category of pupils in 2011 [7, p. 13].

The EU member-states are actively implementing an idea of the pre-school education in practice; in accordance with the statistical data, nowadays in 28 EU countries, 93% children of the pre-school age (starting with 4 years old age) attend infant schools [7, p. 61].

In the context of paying more attention at pre-school education, a lot of countries put their efforts on ensuring the sequence between the pre-school education content and the primary school one; however, the direct sequence is peculiar for some of them only. They are the following:

- the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in particularly, Scotland where this sequence is ensured by the correspondence of certain academic areas of the pre-school education standard (curriculum framework for teaching children aged 3-5) to the compulsory education standard (curriculum recommendations for teaching children aged 5-17);
- Wales (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) where all children aged 3-7 study the subjects which are included in the basic standard;
- Switzerland where the pre-school education purposes are practically identical to the goals of the primary edu-

cation standard. They are aimed at the formation of the infants' skills in reading, writing, and counting.

At the same time, in the majority of countries, pre-school education remains to be an academic level which has its own tasks that are peculiar for it: the development of the child's natural potential. The pre-school education function is the individual's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. At the pre-school education level, the task of the reading skills formation, literacy, counting is peculiar for Scandinavian countries only because of the fact that children start studying at school when they are 7 years old.

Ukrainian primary education is featured by the content and the teaching methodologies modernization in the context of the competence-based education. The legislative starting point is the content of the State standard of curriculum and textbooks which were adopted in 2000 and were in force in the primary school for more than 10 years. In the new edition of the State standard of primary education, competence approach developed in the aspects of the nomenclature adjustment, formulating the requirements for the result component [1].

The key reason for the rapid transformational education processes in competences abroad became its content workload. This problem in primary education is covered in the INCA research "International Trends in Primary Education" (2003) where the permanent inclusion of the new academic areas and topics during the last decades is studied [8, p. 4].

The tool for this problem solution, mainly in the EU states, was chosen to be the content transformation into competence bases. In 2006, in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council (2006/962/EC), the European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning was adopted. The Framework contains eight key competences: communication in the native language, communication in the foreign language, mathematical competence as well as the basic competences in science and technologies; ICT-competence, ability to learn, interpersonal, intercultural and social competence as well as civic competence, business activity, cultural distinctiveness [5].

The adoption of the abovementioned framework intensified transformation of education content in the competences area, in spite of the fact that the format and the speed of such transformation are different. In the framework of the approved national strategies, some countries apply to the systematic approach whereas other states are peculiar for the absence of such strategies and are on the way of introducing some key competencies. Thus, such countries as Poland, Spain and Lithuania adopted a national strategy for the implementation of an integral list of eight competencies; Portugal and the Netherlands applied to natural sciences competences only, in Belgium, Denmark, Norway it is a foreign language communication competence. However, almost all countries have a special strategy designed to form the students' ICT competence.

The primary education content transformation into the principles of competency is ensured by means of avoiding a purely subjective approach and promoting the educational content design in the area of the educational fields and interdisciplinary topics implementation (simultaneously with the subjects' existence). For example, the up-

dated primary school curriculum in the Northern Ireland (2007) contains six curriculum areas whereas the Scottish "Curriculum for Excellence" (2009) contains eight of them [3, p. 53].

In the process of characterizing the educational field introduction at the level ISCE 1, it should be notified that this practice is primarily focused on the formation of the so-called transversal / upper-subject competencies, namely, the ability to learn, civic and ICT competencies.

In terms of the effective part of primary education reinforcement, "achievement scale / levels" become a compulsory element, a part which describes the issues "which the student must know, be able to, demonstrate." In particular, in the National curriculum of the United Kingdom (England), introduced in 2014, it is stated what the student must know, be able to do, demonstrate as a curriculum part for each subject.

In Ukraine, under the conditions of the primary education content transformation into the principles of competency, the role of its effective component, which promotes the search for an adequate technologies evaluation that would allow for the assessment of the students' subject acquisition and key competencies is intensified. Ukrainian pedagogical theory and practice is enriched with the new evaluative techniques (tests, pupils' outcomes portfolios, etc.) designed to make a student an active participant in the learning process, motivating them for their self-learning and self-development.

The reinforcement of the so-called formation (developmental) function assessment in the European education is associated with an idea of the pupils' involvement in the assessment process in contrast to the steady evaluation approach in which the latter was regarded as an action performed by one person, a teacher; under the modern conditions, a bilateral process that involves an active interaction between a teacher and a student is preferred. In the context of the international comparative research, the results of the British scholars' research have demonstrated that schools which have been actively using formation assessment could improve the students' educational outcomes in the percentage that would put them on the same level with such leading countries as South Korea, Finland, Japan, etc. [2, p. 2].

Another positive aspect of the formation assessment is considered to be an aspect of justice, understood in the education context as taking into consideration not only the pupils' learning outcomes, but also the degree of effort that were made by them in order to achieve these results: the schools with a high percentage of the so-called "difficult" pupils, who include the national minorities representatives and problematic social groups, in terms of formation assessment implementation considerably increase the overall indicator of the pupils' outcomes and the schools quality.

Europeans consider the development of the students' ability to learn, which is promoted by such characteristics of the formation assessment as engaging pupils in the learning process, promotion the awareness of its importance for the future life; forming their self-assessment and peer assessment skills as the advantages of the formation evaluation, as well [9, p. 143].

Another area that characterizes the development of the concept of primary school pupils' academic outcomes in foreign countries is the evolvement and the implementa-

tion of the technology assessment to measure the pupils' upper-subject key competencies acquisition:

- in France, the evaluation tools to assess ICT competency levels for the primary, basic and secondary education, including such aspects as behavior in the ICT environment of searching, processing, use and production of information, data exchange were developed;
- in Belgium, schools use ICT (recommendatory) passport for the primary and the secondary schools;
- in Austria, the assessment of pupils' civic competence obtaining involves the evaluation of the pupils' acquired characteristics to solve problems and think critically.

However, it is noteworthy to state that upper-subject competences assessment remains to be a research area which has been studied sufficiently in foreign education.

Conclusions and the further researches prospects.

Under the conditions of the European vector of the primary education development, the comprehension of the positive feedback in the education content of the European states which is advantageous for the homeland pedagogical theory and practice is significant in Ukraine. First of all, it is the reinforcement of the formation of the junior schoolchildren's reading, writing, and counting skills. Primary school remains to be a stage when the basic skills which are inevitable for the development of such key competences as "speaking in a native language", "mathematical competence", "a competence in science and technology / natural sciences competence" are formed. Nowadays, the member-states take enhanced measures in this area:

- in France, the updated primary education content is aimed at literacy by means of the reinforcement of measures to form the so-called junior schoolchildren's basic competence (reading, writing, speaking, counting). For this purpose, in the curriculum of the primary school basic cycle, minimum 2 hours 30 minutes are spent on the compulsory lessons of reading and writing a week whereas in the cycle of the in-depth skills development, children must comprehend 180 recommended texts during the daily compulsory lessons of reading and writing;

- in Spain, the primary education purpose is announced to be ensuring the opportunities for acquiring "the basic knowledge, abilities, and skills" which include speaking, reading, writing, understanding arithmetic operations as well as the realization of the interrelations with the environment. For this purpose, the National Plan of Literacy Support which supported joining efforts of schools, parents, libraries, and publishers for the reading promotion among children and the youth had been implemented;

- in the National recommendations for the implementation of the National Primary Education Curriculum in Ireland, literacy and counting are considered as the key skills to be obtained by the primary school pupils.

- in order to increase the citizens' literacy level in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy were implemented. In these strategies framework, primary schools spend an extra hour on teaching children reading and writing and one hour on Mathematics daily.

Another prospect for the homeland theory and practice is considered to be the European countries lay-outs in the integral education content which includes activity and value components, except for the cognitive one.

Nowadays the basic skills to read, to write, and to count which define the term "literacy" are considered in a more detailed way: except for the cognitive and the operational features, they comprise motivational, social and personality-oriented ones so that all citizens of the EU states realize their importance [12, p. 12]. The latter draw a certain parallel between the skills which are found as the key competences and the society's economic success: population literacy is connected to the countries competitiveness as well as the social prosperity which leads to the activation in the literacy area enriched by the value aspects:

– in France, pupils who have finished the level ISCE 1 must have a range of value, cognitive, social and cultural as well as communicative characteristics except for the basic skills in reading, writing, and counting;

– in Germany, pupils' individual development, obtaining social skills, and encouraging critical and independent thinking, except for literacy fundamentals are the primary education purposes;

– in Scotland (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), "Curriculum for Excellence" is focused on ensuring pupils' success, confident individuals, re-

sponsible citizens, and effective participants in the life of the society";

– in the Netherlands, the primary school targets are the key skills which must be obtained both in the subject areas and on the inter-curricular basis. It notifies the significance of the integrated approach to teaching for the pupil's integral development that includes his/her emotional, intellectual, creative, and physical development, ensuring the socially important features. In particular, the key skills include the positive attitude to work, the ability to work in accordance with the plan, the usage of various teaching strategies, the realization of one's own opportunities, the ability to behave in the society in the reasonable way, the usage of different communication means including the new technologies [10, p. 4].

The abovementioned issues are achieved by means of the subjects/subject areas dominating in the content; they are aimed at the basic characteristics ensuring, the integrated approach implementation in the education content structuring, education purposes formulation in the practical academic outcomes.

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