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Urszula Tyluś. Improvement of pragmatic potential of self-education among contemporary school students.

The aim of the article is to present the importance of self-improvement - work upon yourself in existential process of every human being and implementation capacity within operating conditions of school environment. An important element in the development of pragmatic potential towards self-education among students is the fulfilment of self-education process achieved by introducing into school curricula contents concerning this field together with the application of appropriate methodical procedures.

Key words: self-improvement, self-development, methods, school environment

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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP WITHIN A COMMUNITY POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEES

Article presents the essence and importance of multicultural education in the process of building positive relationships between local communities and refugees. Modern man is a witness of changes such as: migration, refugees, which implies an increasing number of multi-ethnicity countries, societies and the related issues of multiculturalism. In order to prevent conflicts arising from the structure of heterogeneous societies, awareness should be raised to educate the public in the direction of openness to cultural diversity. In that process schools have an important task to complete, not only in education but also in manners. This article presents the results of research on the attitude of Poles towards refugees. The chapter shows a teacher working in a small rural primary school where refugees children learn together with the children of Polish nationality. A key role in the creation of multicultural education plays a teacher, on whose teaching skills and attitude depends the success of the learning process, integration and taking advantage of the chance afforded by education of both, the children of Polish nationality and the refugees.

Key words: intercultural education, child, refugee, integration

Introduction. The inevitable phenomena that we observe in the world today include globalization, migration, refugees and an increasing number of multi-ethnic countries; which in turn implies the multicultural issues such as coexistence of different values within a single state organism. The intermixing of cultures leads to a series of conflicts and misunderstandings. Modern science in turn is led to pay attention to new, previously unknown areas of research. One such area is the issue of refugees. This phenomenon is known to humanity for thousands of years. Over the centuries millions of people were searching for and found protection in other countries. Among others, refugees were Jews who took refuge in the fifteenth century, when they were persecuted and expelled from Spain and Portugal. Refugees also were Amish and Mennonites, who at the beginning of eighteenth century fled from Europe to settle in the United States, do to persecuted for their religion. Unfortunately, there were many cases of such escapes in the world (Kosowicz, Mark

2008, p.49). The decision to enter the «refugee journey» is typically forced by external factors, often related to suffering, war, persecution and threat to life. A fugitive, for many people is associated with a person who has had a traumatic experience. Taking into account the applicable international law, the term «refugee» is defined and has a very specific meaning (Oleksiewicz J.2006, p. 21). The Geneva Convention clarifies who can be considered a refugee, so that in all countries - signatories, apply the same understanding of the concept, according to which a refugee may be regarded as a person who left their country because of well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (Geneva Convention 1951, Art. 1).

A turning point in the Polish asylum policy was the beginning of the 90's, do to Poland becoming a party to the Geneva Convention of 1951 on September 27th 1991 and consequently adopting international obligations to protect asylum seekers. Poland provides refugees following forms of protection: refugee status, subsidiary protection, tolerated stay permit, asylum and the protection of holidays. In practice this mostly applies to subsidiary protection and refugee status. Refugee status is granted to those who meet the criteria set forth in the Convention, otherwise the subsidiary protection is granted to foreigners who do not meet the requirements for refugee status, but whose return to the country of origin would be compromised by the serious danger, such as a conviction for death penalty, torture, inhumane treatment, or serious hazard to health and life due to the widespread violence against civilians in situations of armed conflict (Kushner, T., K. Knox, 1999).

Quite a common phenomenon among refugees is that first they cross national borders in an illegal manner, and then try to get refugee status. In the above situation, the Geneva Convention prohibits the state any imposition of penalties for illegal entry or presence, on refugees who came directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened, provided that they present themselves without delay to the authorities concerned and present good cause for their illegal entry or presence (Białcorkiewicz J.1999).

During the application process of consideration for refugee status, applicants are held in special centers for refugees without influence on the choice of such a center. They are also at risk of expulsion and deportation to their home country. Under Polish law, the integration of refugees comes after a decision to award any of the forms of protection in the Polish Republic, and after leaving the refugee center (Goodwin-Gill GS1996).

Integration of refugees into the host society is regarded as a most desirable state. Poland officially declared the implementation of refugee integration policy, whose main objective is to open the host country to new arrivals, and allow migrants a full-fledged participation in society. However, there are no clear guidelines that would determine on what would the process of integration rely on, likewise there is no indicators on the basis of which the success of the process can be judged. Many definitions focus on certain requirements that must be met by a refugee to be considered as integrated, with no account for the important role of local communities in this process (Grzymała-Moszczyńska H. 2000, p. 24).

One of the few approaches stressing a need for cooperation of both parties, is presented in the definition adopted by the UNHCR (The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), which describes the integration of refugees as: dynamic and multifaceted two-way process that requires efforts from all stakeholders, including the willingness of refugees to adapt to a host society without sacrificing their own cultural identity as well as equal readiness of host communities and their public institutions to accept refugees while meeting the needs of a heterogeneous society.

Creation of a multicultural society, which is the main objective of the integration, is possible only through mutual acceptance of migrants and the host society. Such acceptance allows the inclusion of foreigners in the life of a new society, while maintaining their own cultural identity. Thus, the success of foreigners integration in a new country, and ultimately the creation of a multicultural society is dependent on both: the attitudes of the newcomers, as well as the factors attributable to the host country.

Only recently it was realized, as writes J. Nikitorowicz: that the population of immigrants who remain, creates a permanent multicultural society with many problems, because a democracy accepting pluralism and providing a solution to the needs of different groups of population, does not create an environment in which cultural diversity could be achieved (Nikitorowicz J. 2009, p. 264-265).

Refugee children. Often, families are fleeing countries that are war torn or full of persecution. In such cases, one of the most frequently professed reasons why parents choose to seek a better life in another country is the welfare of a child. In Poland anywhere from three to four thousand people a year seek the refugee status. Children account for at least half of that number. Many of them treat Poland as a transit country on the way to western Europe, while many have irregular legal situations, and almost none speak Polish. Very often just the decision to emigrate to another country is a great physical and mental burden. However, the difficulties do not end upon arrival in another country: stay in the center for foreigners, while awaiting the decision to be granted (or not to) refugee status. All this refugee experience makes a significant impact on the psychological and social functioning of a human being.

When people move to a country of a different cultural region, they enter a new cultural system, a different system of norms, values and behaviors. That in turn can lead to a number of misunderstandings, a sense of confusion, stress and anger. In literature, the moment of contact between these two divergent systems of human consciousness and the accompanying feelings and reactions is called a culture shock (Pawlica-Rafałowska E., Bernacka-Langier A. 2010, p. 24).

Refugee children do not have a country, often lack a roof over their heads and sometimes even family. Orphaned or abandoned, devoid of a sense of security, they are children without a childhood, who come out of a trauma and emotional difficulties that overwhelm them. Many old enough that they know and remember what has happened in their country of origin and still too young to accept it, or simply «like adults» learn to live with it. All of this is a huge obstacle in the education of refugee children (Malczewska H. 2001, p. 26).

In a situation where young people live in fear, insecurity and instability, they often take two extreme attitudes: some simply engulf themselves in studies to forget about their experiences, while others absorbed in memories, are not able to learn at all. Psychological condition of young refugees obviously affects their motivation to learn, but also the opportunity to learn with physical inability to absorb information.

For refugee children regular attendance in school is one of the best ways for return to normalcy. Do to contact with peers and rapid learning of the language by being thrown in to the deep water, they are the quickest to integrate and become guides for their parents in a new country. Refugee experience shows that full integration is possible only in the second generation, which includes refugees who ended up in a foreign country as children or who have been born in it (Koszewska K. 2001, p. 10).

Schools in Poland, which function in a multicultural environment and come into contact with the problem of refugees on daily basis, have a very difficult task. The children of refugees in Poland are subject to compulsory education and are entitled to free education. However, often they show a low turnout in the classroom, and sometimes they dropout of school. In school they face problems with the education system unprepared for schooling of foreign children and the inadequate preparation of teachers. The children lack a habit of learning and systematic preparation for the lesson, because they were never taut before. In addition there is a language barrier, with lack of, or poor knowledge of the Polish language, in many cases those children are limited to knowledge of only the mother tongue. As a result, children with learning difficulties do not attend extra-curricular activities offered by the school. In many Polish schools, cultural differences amplified by poor command of the language, result in refugee children being isolated from their peer groups. Adding to this frequent discrimination against foreign culture, provides for an atmosphere unfavorable to the integration process. Part of this is the fact that children of those applying for refugee status generally come from more conservative communities, which profess a different religion (Kosowicz A.2009, p. 49-50).

Research also indicates that with time the public will become more multicultural. The last decades of previous century were a time of crystallization of a new perspective on issues related to education in multicultural societies. Different varieties of multicultural education are being replaced by intercultural education (Nikitorowicz J. 2009).

The aim of intercultural education is to seek understanding of different cultures and to enable dialogue between them, thus shaping of young people's openness towards refugees and developing communication skills with them, accompanied by tolerance and understanding towards the «strangeness». This takes place primarily at school level, do to the education system's responsibility to prepare students for life in a multicultural society.

The mentioned phenomenon, selectively and briefly outlined out of need, poses a serious challenge to the nature of teaching, because coexistence of different cultures together requires action that will create a common ground between separate «elements».

Material and research methods. Of the 16 refugee centers in Poland, four are located in the Lublin province. Further, in the Polish-Belarusian border area are two

centers in which the author conducts research with consent of the Director of the Office for Foreigners. Close proximity to the border with Belarus provides inevitability of meeting people of different nationalities. These are mainly people of Belarusian, Ukrainian, Chechen, and sparsely Russian nationality. The presence of refugee children attending schools with Polish children is one of just a few examples bringing to light that people of other nationalities live next door to us, and only through conversation we know that they are refugees from Chechnya, not as often from Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Ingushetia. The relations of local communities with migrants are probably the most important factor contributing to their perception of the country in which they obtained their protection. For the migrants it is the first line of confrontation with an unknown social reality, with culture and mentality of Poles, which is a mentality often fraught with stereotypes, prejudices and detachment towards strangers.

Therefore, the main objective of the study was a discovery of Polish residents relations with refugees residing in proximity to Polish – Belarusian border area. To that means a method of diagnostic survey was applied (quantitative research). We can not find a typical standard tool for study of attitudes towards refugees in the literature subject of psychology and sociology. Taking into account the needs and objectives of this research, I developed a tool of my own authorship, in a form of a questionnaire survey in which respondents answer questions by selection of an appropriate number, with accordance to their beliefs: 5 - definitely yes, 4 - rather yes, 3 - I do not know, 2 - probably not, 1 - no.

To that purpose, people from specific locations were chosen, where the refugee centers are located: the city of Biala Podlaska and Kolonia Horbów village. The population study consisted of 200 people. In the chosen locations, the refugee children of different nationalities attend schools with Polish children. The sample «sketch» of cross-cultural class image was undertaken with a use of individual interviews (qualitative research) with teachers, conducted by the author in the months of September, October and November of 2012. Five individual interviews were conducted with teachers working in preschool and 1st through 3rd grades of elementary school, because children of refugees are being taught in these classes. A large amount of information on the life of forced migrants in Poland the researcher obtained through first hand participant observation, by benefit of frequent visits in primary schools as a student tutor. To schools, together with refugee children, also come their parents, though the vast majority are mothers, who often share their life stories. These conversations were mostly in Russian language, as adults learn the Polish language slowly compared to children.

Results and discussion. The obtained results will answer the question: does the attitude of Poles towards the refugees promote integration or relegate them to margins of society, with a loss of a chance to build a multicultural society? Analysis of the results pointed to no significant differentiation in responses attributed to age and education of respondents. There was, however differentiation in responses attributed to gender. Therefore, in table 1 the answers are distributed by arithmetic mean, standard deviation and mean difference.

Table 1. Answer statistics about Polish attitudes towards refugees

Attitude of Poles towards refugees	Women		Men		Difference Medium
	Arithmetic Medium	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Medium	Standard Deviation	
Question 1. I would accept a refugee - as a next door neighbor.	3,67	1,05	3,31	1,38	0,36
Question 2. I would accept a refugee - in my close circle.	3,75	1,07	3,27	1,28	0,48
Question 3. I would accept a marriage of a close relative with a refugee.	3,79	1,18	3,73	1,28	0,06
Question 4. I would marry a refugee.	3,13	1,51	2,92	1,60	0,20
Question 5. I would accept a refugee - as a coworker.	3,79	1,10	3,65	1,20	0,14
Question 6. I would allow for close contact between my kids and refugee kids.	3,71	1,04	3,50	1,10	0,21
Question 7. I would provide assistance to a refugee in need of help.	3,88	1,19	3,69	1,01	0,18

Compiled based on study results from 2012.

Responses of 3 - «do not know» and 2 - «probably not» were dominant, but answers 5 - «definitely yes» and 4 - «rather yes» were rarely encountered. Hence the calculated values of arithmetic mean did not reach a result of 4, which shows a lack of acceptance towards refugee population.

Based on the results presented in Table 1, there are variations between men and women. To all the questions women on average marked higher values. Compared with men, the highest score for women answers was reported on Question 7, which applied to refugee assistance. It should be emphasized that this is the highest score for all responses listed in Table 1. The lowest score was noted in question 4, which applied to marriage with a refugee, and here it should be noted that the results were lower for men than for women.

A not so optimistic research was carried out in Poland by TNS in 2006 (on a representative sample of 1004 people) on the attitude of Poles towards refugees. Almost half (46%) of the Polish society appears to understand the problems of forced migration. As many as 40% of Poles understand who a refugee is. Poles are relatively open to refugee settlement in Poland, with 61% of respondents who expressed

approval for refugees remaining in our country for a long time or permanently. This appears to be an expression of empathy, understanding and sensitivity to their plight. However, most (59%) of Poles believe that refugees should live in dedicated centers, which leads to separation from society and in many cases nullifies any chances of integration. Such a solution was preferred by Poles with no differentiation of attitude by characteristics such as place of residence, age and education. With more expensive issues such as access to employment assistance or schooling - the majority remains skeptical. Such a discrepancy can speak for an interpretation that our current reality is limited to a declaration of openness towards refugees, rather than the actual attitude of openness. Further, these results illustrate many Poles feelings about Poland's current socio-economic state, expressing that our society can not afford to actively assist refugees, and that the available funds should be spent instead on assistance to Polish nationals. Dissatisfaction with their own financial situation increases their reluctance to support direct aid for refugees by the state. Many Poles also express fears that the presence of refugees will increase the number of conflicts on ethnic and nationalistic backgrounds.

The aim of the following stage of research was to shed more light on education in the intercultural classroom, based on teacher interviews and participant observation of the author.

In the Primary School in Berezówka located 25 km from the Polish-Belarusian border, are learning children of Polish origin with children of mostly Chechen refugees. Berezówka is a small village located in the Lublin province, with about 300 inhabitants. The primary school is attended by children from nearby villages and the children from a refugee center. The school has approximately 60 students, which makes it a very small institution compared to other schools in the province. Although it is a small school it focuses children of not only Polish origin but also Chechen and succeeds in the field of education between the Polish and Chechen culture.

Children in the so-called integrated unit are age 6-7 years old. Some refugee children are older (9 - 10 years), but still attend the same class with the children of Polish origin, because they have fallen behind, sometimes significantly: problems with simple mathematical operations, problems with reading and writing. In one branch of classes a single teacher - educator has a very difficult task, namely, conducting classes and games in the bilingual department. That teacher had prepared to work in this branch, diverse in terms of ethnicity, by getting to know mostly the Chechen culture and tradition. Conducted at school are activities in study of Polish language as extra-curricular education for refugee children. All of the children attend, as there is very high interest among the parents for children to learn the Polish language.

Refugee children learn the Polish language at different speeds. It all depends on individual development of each child, as each learns within their ability. Whenever necessary, the teacher in class spends more time on children who are less familiar with Polish language. In addition to Polish, the teacher speaks Russian, which Chechen children without comprehension of Polish understand to the extent necessary to ensure proper communication. From an interview with the teachers it is evident that Polish and Chechen children are familiar with their colleagues' culture, but to a small extent. At the beginning of the school year, there were classes for

familiarization with colleagues from other countries. Wherever possible, the teacher tries to facilitate Polish children learning of Chechen culture and when a need arises teaches Polish children about the culture of Chechen children. It follows that refugee children are not isolated from the children of Polish descent. Different cultures can also have an impact on the collegial relations among peers and in some cases they do. Collegial relations in the branch are correct, but fact remains that refugee children do not always want to participate in social games or play, as reluctance has been observed. Despite this, the teacher is trying to encourage Chechen children to actively participate in the life of the school and cooperate with other children.

Believing that too rigorous of questioning may be poorly received, teachers do not question these Chechen children of their culture and traditions. They have taken to prepare themselves in order to know their culture, tradition and religion, before starting work in classrooms with children of refugees. It should be noted that in said integrated unit, or in the school for that matter, there are no reported problems associated with discrimination of students of different origin.

Polish children integrate with Chechen children on their own, but in some cases they need the teacher's help to communicate with each other to participate in a common game or task, as they establish collegial relationships. This method of integration «step by step» strengthens ties and builds positive relationships. It should be noted that the small school is a kind of a platform for meetings of migrants with residents of local communities in which they live.

Summation. The research results indicate that the views of Poles in regard to the presence of refugees in local communities, do not support the integration of forced migrants in Polish society, despite the sensitivity towards the issues mentioned, and thus do not support the process of building a multicultural society. It appears that an effective policy of integration of refugees in the Polish society should aim to allow for contact between migrants and local communities. Undoubtedly, this policy should be aimed at promoting understanding of refugee phenomenon, which does not automatically imply eliminating concerns that most Poles associate with this phenomenon: anxiety before an increase in crime and unemployment rate.

It would seem that a small towns could not cope with the adoption of refugees. However, a small school in Berezówka in the Lublin province, attended by children of refugees, provides hope to «step by step» build the idea of multiculturalism. The survey data of positive relationships between Polish and refugee children suggests, that in the future such relationship may develop between the locals and adult migrants. Achievement of objectives of intercultural education, started at the level of pre-school education, provides young people opportunity to develop values such as tolerance and respect for other cultures and nationalities, with focus on social dialogue, self-learning and creative application of knowledge.

Prevention of and opposition to the negative social phenomena such as racism, prejudice and discrimination, necessitates changes in the function of education. Such changes should take in to account not only the current state of cultural diversity and ethnicity, but also identify the scope, forms and rules for the implementation of multi and cross cultural education. At school level, it should start by setting the behavior of students and teachers, along with expectations for students, their families and communities.

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Станіслава Назарук, Сергей Никитин. Мультикультурное образование – шанс формирования позитивных позиций локальной общественности в отношении к беженцам.

Статтю приближає суть і значення мультикультурного освіти в процесі побудови позитивних взаємозв'язків між локальними соціумами і беженцями. Сучасний чоловік є свідком поточних змін типу: міграція і бже́нство, які викликають зростаюче кількість поти́єтничності держав, соціумів і з цим пов'язані проблеми мультикультуралізму. Для запобігання конфліктам, що виникають з структури гетерогенних соціумів, слід поширювати знання і навчати суспільство в напрямку позицій відкритості по відношенню до культурних відмінностей. Головна задача в згаданому процесі покладається на школу, в плані не тільки освіти, але і виховання.

В статті представлені результати досліджень на тему відносин поляків до беженців. Розглянуто приклад роботи вчителя в маленькій сільській початковій школі, де навчаються діти беженців разом з дітьми польської національності. Ключову роль у побудові мультикультурного освіти грає вчитель, від його педагогічного майстерства і позиції залежить успішність процесу навчання, інтеграції, а також використання дітьми польської національності і дітей беженців шансу даного освіти.

Ключові слова: мультикультурне освіта, дитина, беженець, інтеграція.