

MODERN AND TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE MUREȘ PRESS OF THE XXTH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT. The study reveals the recurrence of some valuable aspects in the Romanian didactic tradition, as reflected by the pedagogical and general press of the Mureș county during the XXth century, marked by the historical discursive particularities as well as by the multicultural environment, specific to the area. The review of the pedagogical vision along different periods, investigated from the communicational perspective offered by the printed press, explicitly reveals in the old forms of speech very modern educational principles, ideas and methods, such as the importance of interactive strategies, the applied character of knowledge, the focus on the child's individuality, the intuitive principle in education or the school - family partnership. From this connective perspective between the past and the present, the study offers significant arguments that the present-day education in the Mureș area honors a rich pedagogical tradition.

Keywords: *tradition, modernity, Mureș pedagogical press, concept recurrence*

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Die Studie unterstreicht die Rekkurenz der wertvollen Aspekte der traditionellen rumänischen Didaktik, so wie sie durch die pädagogische und informatorische Presse des Kreises Mureș das XX. Jahrhundert über bespiegelt wurden, bezeichnet durch die diskursiven Spezifika jeder Zeitperiode sowie durch das multikulturelle Milieu der Veröffentlichung, das das Spezifikum der Zone ist. Der Rückschluss des pädagogischen Blickfelds, analysiert aus der Perspektive der Kommunikation der schriftlichen Presse, enthüllt explizit in diesem Zeitraum in einer alten Abfassung, Formulierung moderne Prinzipien, Ideen und Bildungsmethoden wie die Wichtigkeit der interaktiven Strategien, der angewandte Charakter der Kenntnisse, Zentrieren auf das Individuum des Kindes, intuitiver Prinzip in der Bildung oder Partnerschaft Schule-Familie. Aus dieser Perspektive, die die Vergangenheit mit der Gegenwart bindet, bietet die Studie relevante Beweise, dass die aktuelle Bildung in der Zone des Flusses Mieresch eine reiche pädagogische Tradition in Ehren hält.

Schlussworte: *Tradition, Modernität, Neumarkter pädagogische Presse, Rekkurenz, Konzepte*

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INTRODUCTION

The editorial profile of the pedagogical and scholar and press can be placed in between the cultural press, by its content, and the specialized press, by its connection to the school environment and public (Petcu, M. 2000). During the entire XXth century, this special category of the press proved to be an important resource for the general press in the Mureș county, due to the formative function it assumed and to the national prestige it brought to the local culture.

This development perspective shows that the pedagogical and scholar press assumed certain roles during different historical periods, in order to support the general development of the local press: a formative role during the inter-war period, a spiritual shelter during communism and a free space of expression during the first decade of post communism.

After its late debut in 1920, the Romanian press in the Mureș area developed on a scholar background, due to an entire generation of teachers (some of them with a solid journalistic experience) who came to Târgu Mureș from other parts of the country, to help at the creation of the local Romanian school system. In the young schools of the town, they set literary societies, professional and scholar publications, creating a formative environment, a true educational and cultural laboratory.

In the inter-war period, the most relevant appearance of the entire Mureș press was the pedagogical and cultural publication *Progres și cultură* (*Progress and culture*, 1933-1938), edited by The Romanian Teachers' Association in the Mureș county. Although it was initially intended as a pedagogical publication, it gained a consistent cultural structure, becoming one of the most important cultural publication of the inter-war period. Further more, the most important journalistic figure of the time was the primary teacher and journalist Vasile Netea, with a fundamental contribution to the evolution of the Romanian local press from the beginning of the inter-war period till the end of the communist period. (Netea, V. 2010).

During communism, the pedagogical and school press represented in Mureș more than a half (52%) of the total publications of the period. Although, more or less, the communist ideology and its propaganda system transformed any publication of the time in a political one, the pedagogical press of the communist period played a major role as a spiritual space of refuge.

After the fall of communism, the general effervescence of the Romanian new "free" press reflected with the similar intensity among teachers and their students. The pedagogical and school publications issued between 1990-2000 (representing 17,5% of the total press of the period) contributed, by their complex editorial structure, to the development of a creative and critical spirit in schools, opposed to the general social and moral vulnerability of the society.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The study operates a radiography of the pedagogical vision in the Mureș area, in the context of each historical period that segmented the XXth century. The findings of the analysis reveal the recurrence of important pedagogical concepts and directions, some of which traverse almost one century, connecting by their value the tradition and the modernity of the Romanian education. From this connective perspective between the past and the present, the study offers significant arguments that the present-day education in the Mureș area honors a rich pedagogical tradition. Besides the conceptual perspective, the study offers an image of the educational communication during certain periods, as reflected by the press, describing a series of precedents relevant for the present from the point of view of an educational environment marked by bilingualism and multiculturalism.

METHOD

The analysis of the modern and traditional pedagogical perspective as revealed by the Mureș press during the XXth century is a case study and a qualitative research. The study seeks to follow the evolution of the pedagogical vision in the area of the old and present Mureș county, by the analysis of the relevant pedagogical publications appeared in this space during the XXth century. The analysis uses a multidiscursive perspective, as that reference angle giving different meanings or connotations to a concept, depending on the context (O'Sullivan et al, 2011).

FINDINGS

The main achievement of the pedagogical and scholar Romanian publications of the Mureș county during the inter-war period was the fact that they managed to overcome their statute as professional publications, by their high scientific standards and complex format, which included professional articles, literature, folklore, math, news, chronics, translations, sports, entertaining.

In this various structure, the publication *Viața școlară (The Scholar Life)* pleaded in 1923 for the importance of interactive methods in teaching and for the applied character of knowledge, a modern direction almost a century ago but also a fundamental practice of the present: "The school will be a basic preoccupation, and we shall defend and support its interests with all our power. We shall renounce to the old fashioned methods of memorization and to the hollow theory, we shall banish all stereotypes and excessive ways of teaching." (*The Free Word*, 1991)

In 1939, the publication *Revista Școalei Normale de învățători din Târgu-Mureș* (*The Târgu Mureș Teaching High School Magazine*) pleaded for the “pedagogical individualism”, a collocation hiding the principles of the present focus on the child’s personal needs: “The educator must be guided in his educational activity only by the child’s needs. The child’s will must be the supreme law. [...] Since there are no identical children, with the exact same predispositions or forces, the line of their natural development can never be the same. So we are not allowed to impose the same target or ideal for the development of the different individualities.” (*The Târgu Mureș Teaching High School Magazine*, 1939)

At its turn, *Graiul dăscălesc* (*The Teachers’ Voice*) approached the problems of the Romanian school system of the time, such as the importance of learning religion for the conservation of nationality, school and politics, teachers and provinciality, the active school principles, with focus on respecting the child’s individuality and applying the intuitive methods. The publication suggested six ways of action: analyzing the situations from a purely pedagogical perspective, sharing the experience, the correction of the errors detected in the educational planning and organization, supporting a good financial condition of the teachers, encouraging the literary creation in school and the promotion of an informative section of the publication dedicated to the latest regulations. Regarding the pedagogical theory and practice, *The Teachers’ Voice* connected its readers to the most important professional findings and directions, analyzing for instance the actuality of the active school: “The issue of the active school is an important one, because it cumulates the entire new pedagogical movement, that reviewed and novelized the pedagogy. We can thus talk about the history of the active school, about its origins, about its connections to the classic pedagogy, about its basis and directions.” (*The Teachers’ Voice*, 1928)

The issue of the Romanian school modernization was also followed by the informative and cultural publications, which granted large spaces to the topic. If today we talk about the communicative – functional pattern of studying Romanian, in the 30s the cultural publication *Clipa* (*The Instant*) talked about the necessity to correlate the universe of the children’s literature to the real universe of the children’s every-day life: “We must mix the obligatory contents with *the pleasure contents*, so that the effort of the child becomes an act made out of pleasure. And this will happen when the pieces of reading – from the manual or from the story books – will touch subjects from the children’s daily activity, with their familiar vocabulary and facts.” (*The Instant*, 1936)

After the disappearance of the entire Romanian press in the Mureș county during the Hungarian occupation (1940-1944) and after the period of transition towards communism, the revival of the pedagogical and school press happened on an ideological background at the end of the 60s, when numerous

scholar publications, although politically contaminated, appeared and continued, in some cases the old series from the inter-war.

Even if the pedagogical press of the communist period appeared under the political pressure of the time, the teachers of the time found resources to express an objective pedagogical vision behind the discursive restrictions of the period: "The teachers will seek to be closer to their pupils. The child will no longer learn by fear of the educator or of the note, but by his conviction that all he is learning is for his own good, and for his people's good." (*New Transylvania*, 1948)

In the 60s, one of the concerns of the 3 years Pedagogic Institute in Târgu Mureș was the increase of the applied character of knowledge, a principle intensely experimented by the future teachers: "One of our objectives is connecting the learning to the practice. This orientation sets all of our initiatives, by the implication of our students in a series of applicative laboratory works, the field practice, the experimental trips. We give a special role to the pedagogical practice in which, besides knowing the secrets of this future calling, we cultivate the professional ethics and the responsibility." (*The Red Star*, 1970)

In 1972, the prestigious cultural publication *Vatra* (*The Home*) included a didactic column in its structure, emphasizing the importance of the audio-visual support among the educational instruments: "The modern audio-visual, available today in every school, are capable to operatively and easily illustrate all the categories of historical sources."

From the social perspective, the newspaper *Steaua roșie* (*The Red Star*) approached the importance of the school - family partnership for the educational success and the consonant development of the children: "The school - this second family by the organized and conducted character of its educational actions, based on the principles of a rigorous, scientific pedagogy, represents the educational element that mediates de collaboration between society and family." (*The Red Star*, 1970) Further more, the publication wrote about The Parents' School, an initiative consisting of conferences addressed to the parents in Romanian and Hungarian "presenting problems of the child's education, the role of education in building the child's personality, the child's psychology, the basic problems of the nervous child etc." (*The Red Star*, 1958)

The press of the first years after the fall of communism combined in the Mures county, as in the entire Romania, the enthusiasm of a new beginning with the profound political, social and economical changes determined by the transition between the former centralized system and the new liberalized system. In such times of transition, the school should assume a guiding role, wrote in 1990 the publication *Glasul cetății* (*The Fortress' Voice*) in Sighișoara: "A psychological and moral therapy should be done in the society and in its fundamental institution: the school. But by whom? Firstly, by those teachers who received some of the spirituality of the old Romanian school. Then, those

who were less affected, due to an extreme effort of self preservation, could contribute to this purification.”

The relevance of the 44 pedagogical and school press released between 1990 - 2000 stays in their contribution to the development of a creative attitude and of a critical spirit in the Mureș school.

Among the pedagogical and cultural publications, *Educație și cultură* was the modern version of homonym publication of the inter-war period, *Progres și cultură*. On the basis of this tradition, the publication aimed to encourage the activity of the professional and scientific associations of the teachers, approaching the latest theories such as the concept of continuous professional development: “Discussing the development of the human personality in its integrality and defining itself as a science of the progress, the education cannot limit its responsibilities and preoccupation to the school years. Especially today, under the impact of the informational explosion, of the rapid depreciation of knowledge and of the accelerated scientific and technical progress, the adult can be exposed during his entire life to a need of changing his educated qualification, assuming new social roles, and therefore the education must support this process of understanding the general need for a continuous autoeducation and autoformation. (*Education and Culture*, 1995)

CONCLUSIONS

Considering this evolution during almost a century, the pedagogical and scholar press in the Mureș county reveals itself as a stream supporting the general development of the local press and assuming a statute according to the necessities of the different historical periods.

The review of the pedagogical vision along different periods, investigated from the communicational perspective offered by the printed press, discovers in the old forms of speech explicit modern educational principles, ideas and methods, such as the importance of interactive strategies, the applied character of knowledge, the focus on the child’s individuality, the intuitive principle in education or the school - family partnership.

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