

## THE CULTURAL-PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE REGIONAL AND THE GLOBAL (ALSO BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE SLOVAKS IN ROMANIA)

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**Abstract:** The paper deals with the multidimensional space of culture from a regional and global perspective. It points to a certain pulsation and influence of cultures in the life of a national minority, respectively describes regionalism as a specific determinant of their cultural existence. It analyses the pedagogical respect of these realities in the concretization of the national educational process (in the background of the pupil's consciousness in relation to these terms). It stresses the naturally present cultural relativism and gradual purposeful improvement of the cultural consciousness of the pupil in the environment and the surroundings of minority schools (also) during the acquisition of cultural codes. The text leads to a wider presentation of the multidimensional process of interpretation and its important segment: national literature as an important form of cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** culture, education, regionalism, globalisation, pedagogy

### Introduction

The system of the region is in the broadest sense the problem of space and time. What characterizes the unity of time and space in a physical sense represents, in culture, art and literature, the unity of the regional or the global, respectively of creativity or tradition. It is the existence of multiple interrelationships and the interconnection of the present, the past and the future. Each new bond reveals a new meaning and value aspect of culture.

According to the declaration of the European Council (1993), the basic unit of the region is its cultural environment. It is a kind of concept which is reflected in the activities of the people living in the given environment. In the history of pedagogy, Alexander von Humboldt introduces the aspects of the determination of pupils and cultural environment. They are in a parallel relationship during the educational process.

In the history of culture, there is the so-called pulsation of expanding, but sometimes even shrinking space. However, the progress of culture also takes place as the dynamics of other, mutually interrelated regions. Irina Grigorjevna Neupokojevová emphasized her understanding of regional systems by matching the historical-cultural type in connection with sociology and cultural studies. She insisted on the historical approach, since regional systems are not equal during the course of their history, therefore their stability must be understood as a form of expression of historical dynamics.

Regarding the criteria for the allocation of the zone, I. G. Neupokojevová has several of them. Besides the proximity of individual historical fates, it is also the historical-cultural-geographical character of differentiation and the cohesive stability of the cultural code. The contribution of her theory lies in the methodologically natural association of cultural (sociocultural) analyses of societies that belong to the complex world of culture. These are all the same directions as the typological matches or lines that do not presuppose genetic affinity (the Romanian comparator Alexandru Dima's formulation). And these are the terms the concept of cultural region is connected with.

### 1 Cultural environment and its multidimensional impact on the region in and out of the school

The concept of culture is one of the central points of philosophy, history of education and human thinking. However, its individual partial fields are indistinguishable and interdependent. At present, the definition of culture is recognized from the aspect

of integrity and breadth (Kroeber, In: Bohannan, Glazer, 1997, p. 159). However, the institutional establishment of this concept is also important, which can be done the most effectively by the proper application of the so-called cultural policy of the state. This term was first mentioned in the German pedagogical journal (*Pädagogischer Revue*, 1840). Culture consists not only of the accumulated knowledge or the sum of values of pupils, but also of the correlated models of behaviour, customs and traditions. However, such a system only makes sense if it is permanently acquired by the individual (in our case, the pupil) during his life (at school, during the educational process). By this, pupils are engaged in their relations to their surroundings, refine their personality, they become part of the environment of the region and receive information from previous times – in our case about their own nationality (Malinowski, In: Bohannan, Glazer, 1997, p. 379). In the background of the theory of education, this principle points to the influence of the environment and the ways of social coexistence of the group (for example, pupils in the class).

What is important is the process of transferring cultural awareness to other generations. Generations transfer values as well as cultural practices. This is the so-called cultural transfer that goes hand in hand with biological transfer (Cavalli-Sforza, Feldman, 1981, p. 127). Cultural anthropologists often associate this issue with the pupil's educational process at school. This brings anthropology and pedagogy closer together in theory and practice. In the horizontal transfer of cultural codes, pupils learn from their classmates, while in the vertical transfer they learn from adults or institutions (such as the school itself, where the values of culture and tradition are transferred during this process. This process is interesting only if the mechanisms of learning by which information is transferred to pupils are also examined.

### 2 Global culture and its impact on the life of an individual (pupil)

Global culture does not count with geographical territory and common historical consciousness is absent. When looking for a connection between teaching global and regional culture, we must count on the fact that the goal of this process is also the self-identification of pupils with their own culture in the process of enculturation, but there is also a moment of getting to know and respecting foreign cultures. Interdisciplinarity – especially in a national context – is therefore very important in the educational process. Special attention is paid to this issue for example by Franek, who highlights the literary translation of this context (Franek, 2013, pp. 138-149).

The process of enculturation is also interesting, as the transfer of new knowledge to pupils takes place in the context of one's own culture, just like acculturation, since this process takes place in the environment of another culture. The term was introduced by Melville J. Herskovits (1948), when he claimed that the individual (pupil) is surrounded by their own culture, which they gradually acquire through learning. The final "outcome" of this process is a pupil who is fully able to integrate into micro-society. In the case of the Slovak national enclave in Romania, it is more or less enculturation. The pupils have a number of lessons devoted to the subject of their own regional culture and the already mentioned pulsation significantly shapes their personal profile. Their space is expanding with new knowledge about a particular nearby region, but is also narrowing, for example, they are also interested in regional cultural personalities. Today's regions of Slovaks in Romania are based on a regional-cultural aspect, for example, they are associated with applied sociology – for example the demographic development of Slovak nationality in relation to the influence on culture. Their effort of sticking to regional elements is the concretisation of the above-mentioned historical dynamics of the last two centuries. Their current culture is basically stable, it is based on historical (hundreds of years existence), cultural

(permanent creation of mental values) and geographical (steady geographical position) characteristics. The Slovaks in Romania can therefore be characterized as being in the so-called zone position.

Art historian Ján Bakoš pointed out the unsustainability of the centristically absolutist and regionally separating concept, saying that the creativity of the regions needs to be examined not in isolation but always in relation to higher systemic units. The cultural potential of the Slovaks in Romania is characterized not only in the background of their own pulsation, but also in relation to other contexts (different region, different language code, different state, different cultural life, different educational model, etc.). Literary scientist Oskár Čepan claimed that topographical issues have topological (and therefore value) backgrounds. Obviously, these values of Slovaks in Romania are valid society-wide, but it is necessary to select and properly determine the height and depth of their "value" from a global aspect. What may be interesting for schoolchildren in Nadlak (for example local superstitions) might not mean anything for pupils in Bratislava. The decisive moment is not the fact that the birth value arises in the centre or on the periphery, but whether it moves with the world. It is about transferring the issue from geographic to socio-psychological soil. Its characteristic feature is a certain closure of the region, which is permeable in terms of system dynamics. Also the Slovaks in Romania (for example also at school) are creating values, and today they are taken into account not due to the aspect of living in Banat but because they have created excellent values of their own existence. In their relations to the external environment, culture and literature are oriented according to the particular regions. Energy sources include the singular, the local and the regional – and the inner diversity of the local becomes the source of the increasing complexity and momentum of the global. The creativity of the region is gradually becoming the condition for the creativity of the entire global system; however, the systemic links of the region are a condition of its momentum – and hence its lifetime (Zajac, 1993, pp. 128-137). In the Central European cultural context, in the background of literary history and literary theory, it is important to apply also a comparative point of view, of course, with the specifics of the nationality. This fact is also pointed out by the important Slavic expert Ivo Pospíšil (Pospíšil, 2008, pp. 137-148). In his later works, he also listed and specified characteristics in relation to the area as a geographical-cultural unit and literature (Pospíšil, 2010, pp. 61-73). Another important literary scientist Miloš Zelenka wrote about the meaning of the comparative approach in this constellation (Zelenka, 2005, pp. 1-15).

### 3 Regional identity of minority individuals (pupils) – Slovaks in Romania

The need for the emergence of regional elements – and the related strengthening of regional identity – is also reflected in schools due to the strengthening of globalization tendencies. In schools with the Slovak language of instruction in Romania, closely related to these elements, these aspects are particularly important. Even according to the OECD, there is a need to strengthen pupils' regional awareness in these schools. It is a process coming from below, that is, from enthusiastic teachers who do not hesitate to write a variety of texts and textbooks for lessons of history and social studies, etc. A special moment is the fact that at present a working team is being created at the State Educational Institute in Bratislava, which has the task of creating framework documents for the teaching of the regional culture of the Lowland Slovaks as an optional subject for pupils in Slovakia. Therefore, both primary sources and methodological guidelines are important. The development of the regional consciousness of pupils cannot be reduced to the simple description of folk customs and traditions. This consciousness should not only be preserved, it must also be extended with the typical topics of the region. The teaching of traditional culture must go hand in hand with the teaching of regional realities.

Already in the past, regionalism was understood as *"a resultant of cultural relations, not of the necessity of art... Art has a*

*common universal home, which is mankind itself"* (Rúfus, 1974, p. 62). These relations are also specified in the national culture of a particular region: for example, in Slovak culture in Romania.

Romania is a heterogeneous state with multiple minorities in terms of culture. As a curiosity let us mention that the current President of Romania – Klaus Iohannis – has Saxon nationality from Transylvania with German mother tongue. One of the minorities is (the above mentioned) Slovaks, whose differentiation is primarily done on the aspect of ethnicity. On a regional level, this means localities that are inhabited mainly, respectively partially by the Slovaks. These are located in the northern part of Banat, Romania, near the town of Nadlak. This is an economically and culturally relatively advanced population. The second, a less developed cultural component of the Slovak population inhabits the northwest of the country in the villages of the Romanian Ore Mountains, where they are a very special cultural group even today. Both territories are actually regional units that contribute to multiculturalism. Its degree in theory and practice also depends on the upbringing of the younger generation in schools, where concepts such as ethnicity, regionalism and globalization are specified.

Slovak compatriot literature is an important part of Slovak culture abroad. Its expressions are most naturally manifested through the relations mentioned, because this space is not only geographic: it also contains *"... a distinct spiritual dimension with its own past and present and definitely also the future. It contains and corresponds to the inputs and outputs of Slovak minority literature"* (Harpáň, 2004, p. 84). At the same time, it should be emphasized that minority culture is the integral, typical and integral part of Slovak culture (Harpáň, 2004, pp. 12-18).

The theoretical problem of migration, which is also typical for Slovak national culture in Romania, can provide impulses also for addressing the question of the author's two or multiple homelands. In this case, the question of the existence of specific inter-literary relationships and their periodization come to the foreground, which includes the developmental (a)synchronicity between the culture of the metropolis (i.e. the centre, for example Slovakia) and the culture of migration (i.e. the periphery, for example Slovak culture in Romania). As a supporting interpretative approach to the phenomenon of (this) migration, similarly for that reason, the following is pointed out: *"... the respect for its multi-contextualisation, which is understood not only as a political but also as an artistically diverse dialogue of cultures, which is primarily auto-communication within the structured and value-differentiated system ..."* (Zelenka, 2002, p. 46).

Therefore, more and more space is gained by the so called cultural relativism, which deals with the issue of literature as cultural memory. It stems from the hermeneutic tradition of empathy and Gadamerian understanding; accents the importance of the periphery; the need for mutual penetration of cultures (i.e. creolization). Several experts have written about the mutual Slovak-Romanian cultural relations in various aspects. From the scientific aspect of Slovak national culture in Romania, it was, for example, the Slovakist Dagmar Mária Anoca (Anoca, 2013, pp. 411-412). To a certain extent, there is an identifiable parallel with the theory of Dionýz Ďurišin, which rejects any axiological nature. On the one hand, there are the supporters of aesthetically delicate analyses of literary texts, on the other hand experts in interliterariness, who do not see aesthetically but poetically. Pupils in minority schools in Romania must be led to perceive the attributes of their own minority and region in the literary text.

In practice, it can be a question of nationality and its (self) identification. There is the open question about the proportion of canonized interpretation and the free description of the principles governing the (inter) cultural communication process. This mutual relationship – in the background of some liberalism – is thus a reflection bridge while working with literature as an

important component of culture. Its centre is a text that is to be understood as a systematic place for possible interpretations: their number refers to "... not only the given text, but also texts which, due to various contexts, are layered them, respectively, which, for the sake of better understanding, must be layered on them" (Corbineau – Hoffmannová, 2008, p. 40). This is the way knowledge of the surroundings, region and state is layered at pupils in Slovak minority schools in Romania – that is, there is a distinct spiritual path from the regional to the global (of course, while maintaining all aspects).

The text as a whole has an important deal with the foreign: with the influence of different cultures. This is how culture operates in interliterary contexts. Texts very often create images that must be captured perceptually and interpretatively by the reader through a critical analysis. For example, the journeys of heroes to foreign countries – cultural areas – can be the concretization of culture. So there is an image of the self and the image of the foreign (also) in Slovak minority culture and literature in Romania. The second aspect can only be identified on the bases of our own culture – as culture foreign to ours. This opposition between the foreign and the familiar is created not only by nationalities but also by several cultures (Corbineau – Hoffmannová, 2008, pp. 121-123).

From Aristotle's Poetics to the present day, authors feel the tension between the unique and the universal, that is, between the regional and the universal. It may seem that a certain motive, verbal expression or arrangement that we have and know within our (up to a certain extent a rather limited) cultural and literary world is not a local phenomenon but the feature of a wider reality (culture). Johann Wolfgang Goethe himself believed in the existence of national literatures, by which he allowed dialogue between the regional and the universal. Nevertheless, in this process it is important to observe also the starting points of the study of the issue of Slovak literary science and its theoretical initiatives. This was supported by Peter Zajac, too (Zajac, 2008, pp. 99-109).

The so-called Geertz method is an important methodological and pedagogically useful research method. According to her, the understanding of culture can only be in the background of the consistent interpretation of the individual's own national existence in the background not only of multicultural but also of regional education (Geertz, In: Bohannan, Glazer, 1997, p. 712). Geertz's understanding of culture is based on a semiotic aspect. According to this, an individual (pupil) lives in a certain network of meanings, which have been created by him/her. The network also includes abstracted meanings, later explanations and analyses. The centre of this analysis is interpretation that is one of the most important methods of understanding abstract and specific things as well as correlations for pupils in the school environment. Therefore, the variety of meanings in the cultural field is significant. According to John B. Goodenough, the pupils' knowledge, skills and habits create a system of cognitive knowledge, which is the basic pillar of the ability to understand and interpret the world.

#### **4 The segment of national culture as the starting point and the objective of the regional and the global**

The Slovak national minority in Romania was not created because of its own will but "... it is the result of complex historical and political circumstances and connections ... it is also a unique phenomenon ... The relationship between the centre and the periphery ... can be ... named as the consciousness of the twofold relationship between the whole and the part ..." (Harpán, 2000, p. 27 and p. 29). However, the phenomenon is not a closed and static system, defined state-politically but open and dynamic. Slovak compatriot culture can therefore be understood as a literary expression of the region. The very incorporation of "being Slovak" in Romania into the entire Slovak cultural context is "... unshakable, yet it is not a one-off and simple matter. It occurs on various levels ... The highest level all other levels are connected to emerges from the essence of the pluralist development of the entire literature in the

country: one of its developmental segments, forming a whole, is minority literature" (Harpán, 2004, p. 76). From this point of view, national literature as the manifestation of culture belongs to the specific interliterary community. This concept as a model phenomenon of the interliterary process in Slovak literary science was first defined by Dionýz Ďurišin, who claimed that the specificity of the national culture manifests itself in the fact that it develops and typologically determines itself in relation to several literary contexts: the context of national culture, the context of the regional, resp. state department, and its own developmental or typological context.

National culture involves the typological category of being special. The individual is to be understood as a national-literary context and the general as the interliterary; the special as the context of inter-literary communities. At a certain level, in the context of national literature, there is a tendency to stand apart from the individual category, when the special begins to function and typologically manifest itself as the new individual. This type of national literature in the inter-literary community "... is not subordinated by a more developed and larger national-political context, but is determined in relation to them ... The literary-historical material of national literatures points at their relations to several national-literary contexts quite clearly" (Harpán, 2000, pp. 13-14). In relation to the Slovak national-literary context, Slovak culture in Romania was manifested in thematic specialty, conditioned by its own ethnic environment and elements of regional colour. This actually starts with a certain development-typological parallel of the special and the individual context. In later development, however, the opposite process can be observed: the efforts of individual writers to overcome the typology of local colour and to give their literary testimonies a more universal form.

The category of the special, which is typologically characteristic for national literature, has not only a differentiation but also an integration and complementary function. This is reflected in most of the texts of authors of Slovak nationality in Romania.

From the middle of the 19th century until the first third of the 20th century there was a certain genetic contact with the mother country. This state of affairs was, of course, determined by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and by the (e)migration of population. In the development of the cultural activity and literary creation of the Slovaks there, we must mention Ľudovít Haan, Daniel Zajac, Ivan Bujna or Ondrej Seberíni, who came to Nadlak, the centre of the Slovaks in Romania, to be a priest, Jozef Gregor Tajovský, who came for occupational reasons from the northern region as an accountant, and Peter Suchanský, who (as the opposite case) left for Czechoslovakia in the inter-war period. In the post-war development of this literature, these life paths were determined mainly by university studies and the subsequent fulfilment of the position of Slovak intelligence in Romania. It mainly involved travels to Bucharest, Timisoara, Bihor, Moldavia and so on. It is important to create a time limit for this literary development: from 1853 (the first cultural mention of the Slovaks in Romania) until the first third of the 20th century, the above-mentioned genetic contact is reflected in their writings (for example, the journey of the heroes to the city of Martin by a steamship in the prose of Ondrej Seberíni). After 1945, this relationship changes. Until the end of the 1970s, there was a publication vacuum. From that period to 1989, we can talk about a kind of parallel development in the direction of mother culture and low interest of Czechoslovakia in the writings of Slovaks in Romania. At that time, Slovak writings in Romania were quite isolated, thematically "reduced", for example, as an interesting fact there was the description of a trip to the Black Sea coast or Bihor. This arc, of course, is also reflected in the testimonies and replicas of the heroes, in which both own and foreign elements are mixed. On this basis, texts or particular linguistic situations – dialogues, intertexts – are polyphonic. However, it is necessary to add that this phenomenon only makes the cultural context in question special, it is not a central phenomenon, but a unique one that concretises the aforementioned claims, and is in a certain sense - even to a minimal extent – an occasional and regional characteristic feature.

## Conclusion

The issue of the cultural and pedagogical aspects of the regional and the global is always up-to-date in our multicultural world. For this reason, exploring this issue is of permanent importance. This applies more if special attributes are associated with generally valid statements. This paper was about the specification of a national minority, the Slovaks in Romania. The analysis was based on the multidimensional impact of the cultural environment in relation to the region itself – both in school and out-of-school settings. The natural pedagogical understanding of this phenomenon from the aspect of the pupil in the given region has been emphasised. Cultural awareness is extremely important for pupils in terms of the formation of their natural intellectual personality. We have not even forgotten the obvious impact of global culture on the complex development of the individual, whereas we have gradually narrowed the scope of our interest to the partial issue of the regional identity of the representatives of this national minority. We have gradually pointed out the specificities of the natural development of a national culture with regard to the literary-historical segment of this enclave in relation to the regional and the global. This methodological approach gave a multidimensional picture of the position of the selected starting point, while describing some procedures, theories, ideas and experiences characterized the specific shaping of the personality of the pupil from the position of various sociological fields: culture, pedagogy and sociology.

On the basis of the above, we can claim that the culture of a nationality lives especially in contact with another culture (context). It is only such diverse contacts that create "... *light, shining forward and backward engaging the text into dialogue ... This contact is a dialogic contact between texts ... Mutual understanding between centuries and millennia, among nations, nationalities and cultures provides the complex unity of all mankind, all world cultures ...*" (Bachtin, 1988, p. 395 and p. 401). Therefore, we agree with this unstoppable and always valid idea of Michail Machajlovič Bachtin, thus creating a united in a special, special in a unified, global in a regional, regional and global ... Therefore, we agree with this everlasting and always valid idea of Michail Machajlovič Bachtin, since this is the way of creating the universal in the special, the special in the universal, the global in the regional, and the regional in the global.

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