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# Researching Ways of the Phenomena “Cultural and Pedagogical Borderlands” of Belarus



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## Abstract

The article describes paradigm approach to the cultural and pedagogical borderlands phenomena. The author defined and justified main paradigms of education development in relation to the cultural and historical conditions in Belarus.

**Keywords:** Cultural and pedagogical borderlands; Globalization; Methodological paradigm; education; Intercultural dialog

## Mini Review

At the present stage, the cultural space of the borderland can be viewed from different angles, since it has a significant number of unique characteristics and the presence of a special creative potential. This is due to the fact that any border region is a field of intercultural interactions by definition and the cultural space of the border is a cross-cultural space. Cultures dialogue for Belarus is a factor that organically determines culture. Belarusians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Russians, Poles are connected by centuries-old history, close civilizational roots, culture, traditions. The proclamation of the sovereign Republic of Belarus in 1991 gave a powerful impulse to the formation of new principles of good neighborliness. The existence of a common border, mutual objective interests in ensuring cross-border traffic on the East-West line have become the basis for a wide range of cross-border cooperation between Belarus, Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania.

Genesis study of the historical and cultural traditions of the Belarusian people allowed us to establish the phenomenon of the “cultural and pedagogical frontier”, the essence of which was as follows: culture and education in the Belarusian lands were formed and developed at the crossroads of two types of Christian

civilization - western, Roman Catholic, and eastern, Slavic-Russian, Byzantine-Orthodox.

Intercultural dialogue includes ethnic, linguistic, literary, confessional and other cross-border contacts, as well as influences. The study of this problem shows that cultural boundaries can be noticeable and latent, rectilinear and undulating, narrow and wide, “under lock and key” and transparent, changeable and permanent. The history of culture and education of Belarus demonstrates that its borders have always been open and transparent. Throughout its history, the Belarusian lands were part of various state formations. The absence of an expressive Belarusian character in the state-political organism caused the openness of its culture to external influences, the strong susceptibility of its elites to assimilation influences from neighboring cultures, languages, religions, deep national and ethno-cultural tolerance.

All European artistic styles from Romanesque to various trends of postmodernism in a reflexed version and creatively reworked on their own soil are represented in the culture of Belarus. This was expressed in the process of mutual influence of Eastern and Western European cultural traditions. Russian

and Western European traditions in iconography, the use of the heritage of Byzantine-Russian and Roman Catholic Church law in the development of the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, the tolerant combination of humanism and religious ideology in the culture of Belarus of the Renaissance, the creation of Uniatism as a synthesis of Orthodoxy and Catholicism, the impact of the achievements of the Educational Commission of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on creation of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Empire. The trends shown largely ensured the creative rise of Belarusian culture in the XVI – early XVII centuries. In the works of the cultural elite of the Belarusian people (F. Skaryna, N. Gusovsky, S. Budny, L. Sapieha, V. Tyapinsky, L. Zizania, A. Volovich) the key idea of the development of Belarusian culture was substantiated and formulated – the synthesis of ideals and values of East and West, tolerance to different cultures, religions and confessions [1].

The cultural and civilizational orientation of Belarus has not been a frozen and monotonous phenomenon and has repeatedly changed over a long period. Many cultural and spiritual currents met, interacted, enriched and reinterpreted on a local basis at the Belarusian “crossroads”. As a result of the spread of non-ethnic influences, whole cultural substrates and enclaves have emerged here. These cultural and spiritual layers cannot be separated from the culture of Belarus, which has the same right to enroll them in its cultural heritage, as did the Russian and Polish cultures in relation to many of its phenomena and personalities.

An expressive example is the activity and views of the Belarusian-Russian educator Simeon Polotsky [2]. He laid the foundations of Russian book printing, revealed the national and original type of Baroque culture of Belarus and Russia. This type of culture was based on a double synthesis: on the harmonization of medieval and Renaissance ideological orientations and spiritual values, on the one hand, and a compromise between Orthodox traditionalism and European scientific rationalism, on the other. In Belarus, his work complemented the unfinished humanistic tradition of the Renaissance. In Russia, the “Russian Baroque” compensated for the absence of a Renaissance type of culture there. A talented and creatively active Belarusian educator - “Westerner”, a cultural figure of compromise orientation Simeon Polotsky laid the supporting structures of Russian education.

The first half of the nineteenth century is closely linked with the process of reorientation of the education system in Belarus from the Polish Catholic to the Eastern Orthodox model of education. Russian cultural enlightenment through the expansion of Orthodoxy and the introduction of the Russian language into the educational process has become the most important direction of educational policy. The assessment of the factor of “Russification” in historiography is not unambiguous. At the same time, the influence of the Russian enlightenment on the formation of the Belarusian national school and pedagogy was beneficial from a scientific and pedagogical point of view. The principle of

nationality developed by K. D. Ushinsky in the nineteenth century, the key element of which was education in the native language, manifested itself in the works of Belarusian educators and teachers (Y. Chechet, Y. Borshchevsky, V. Dunin-Marcinkevich). The idea of nationality took shape most expressively in the writings of the ideologist of the Belarusian cultural revival of the late nineteenth century, F. Bogushevich, who called: “Don’t leave the Belarusian language, in order not to die!”. The principle of nationality formed a key link in the concept of the Belarusian national school, developed by the leaders of the Belarusian national and cultural revival of the early twentieth century (M. Bogdanovich, Y. Kolas, Y. Kupala, V. Lastovsky, A. Lutskevich, S. Poluyan, Aunt.). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Belarus assimilated the achievements of Russian culture through the synthesis of realistic and modernist trends in art and literature [3].

A modern scientific study of pre-Soviet historical and cultural topics should combine several methodological paradigms combined in a broad context of “empire-province”. The first paradigm (provincial, Belarusian) should focus on the study of intra-Belarusian factors of cultural development. For a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the cultural processes taking place here, it is necessary to take into account and analyze the factors of ethnicity, confessionality, various civilizational orientations, modernization, and government policy.

Another research paradigm (all-Russian) provides for the inclusion of the local Belarusian factor in a broad all-Russian context. The factors and approaches that were used in the Belarusian paradigm must be correlated with the trends in the development of the Russian Empire in the relevant spheres, including the prevailing political and ideological concepts (the theory of “official nationality”, the concept of “Western Russianism”), methods of educational policy on the western outskirts of the empire (primarily Russification and depolonization), theoretical the search for Russian pedagogy in the field of national educational values. The third research paradigm (regional) involves the use of a comparative approach to the analysis of historical and cultural material on a regional scale under the conditional name “western provinces” of the Russian Empire as part of the territories of modern Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine and Poland. The comparison of various factors of the development of Belarusian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Polish provinces (educational, ethnic, confessional, cultural and civilizational) opens the way to many interesting, sometimes paradoxical findings and conclusions [2].

The modern world is faced with the necessity of living in the context of the intersection of various, often oppositely directed, cultural trends. In many countries, the lack of experience of coexistence of ethnic, confessional, ideological approaches has led either to an escalation of social tension, or to the absorption of democratic-liberal civilization by new radical trends. In such a situation, the analysis of the experience of those countries where various cultural trends have historically met, interacted, enriched

and reinterpreted is updated. Consequently, understanding the patterns of the internal socio-economic, socio-political, spiritual and national development of the Belarusian lands through the prism of the cultural frontier can become the basis for creating a predictive model of mutual influences in a multicultural society.

For the best presentation of such a predictive model, the author turned to the pedagogical refraction of the interdisciplinary term “frame”, presenting the frame as a universal descriptive category that allows organizing systems without the participation of discursive control. The created frame predictive model makes it possible to determine the main ways of interaction of internal and external factors in specific national and cultural realities. The levels (specifically historical and reference) are filled with pedagogical content and reflect the mechanisms of real and variable functioning of the education system. First of all, this is due to the inability to embrace all spheres of socio-cultural life. But perhaps even more important is that it is the national school and the nature of education that are the most vivid and accurate indicators of the real socio-political, confessional and economic situation in each state.

The reference level (hypothetically ideal content) of the author’s model allowed, while maintaining the basic parameters, to simulate the possible development of a national school under the condition of a different educational policy. The identification of key frames and the determination of the impact of their content on the process and result of school nation-building also made it possible to expand the boundaries of the application of historical and pedagogical knowledge: from analysis and identification of patterns to predictive modeling of pedagogical systems.

It is necessary to take into account the axiological ambiguity of

the creative heritage of cultural and scientific figures who worked on the Russian-Belarusian border. The level of national self-identification varies both for individual creators of culture and for its individual types, styles and genres. Therefore, the comparative analysis of the interaction of different cultures in the Belarusian region remains a promising direction for the development of cultural comparative studies. It is important to study the in-depth characteristics of the psychological foundations of the Russian and Belarusian mentality in culture and education, aimed at the development of centripetal educational processes at the regional and Russian-Belarusian level; to develop mechanisms for interaction of cultural and educational projects in the humanitarian and information sphere; to study the professional activities of Russian and Belarusian educational and cultural institutions through a detailed retrospective comparative analysis. The problem of the future development of cultures is connected with the borderlands, either by integrating with one of the border cultural centers, or by developing one’s own identity, multi-personality and acting as a “cultural intermediary” between the West and the East. In the context of globalization, the idea of tolerance and intercultural dialogue in the process of interaction between different cultures is being actualized.

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