

UDC 37.013.74:005.745

Kurylo V. S.,

Vakhovs'ky L. Ts.

**EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN COMPARATIVE RESEARCH
(ON THE BASIS OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 14TH WORLD CONGRESS
OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETIES)**

In the context of globalization and the formation of a single European space, comparative education, also called pedagogical comparativistics, is one of the most significant factors in the development of education. Today, it is more than a pedagogical science; it is gradually turning into a special independent branch of humanities knowledge. This distinguishing feature of modern comparative education was advanced by Brian Holmes (1920 – 1993), a famous English comparatist and a prominent figure in education. In his work *Trends in Comparative Education*, he emphasized that pedagogical comparativistics should deal not only with the study, comparison, and analysis of specific pedagogical (school) problems. Its tasks in the modern world expand to include the scientific understanding of the fundamental trends of educational systems, as well as participation in the theoretical grounding of the national education policy and practical implementation of educational strategies [5, 343].

It is worthwhile to note that Ukrainian pedagogical comparatists (N. Lavrychenko, H. Yehorov, A. Sbruyeva), as well as prominent Russian experts (B. Vulfson, O. Dzhuryns'ky, V. Kapranova, Z. Mal'kova, V. Titov et al.) are also aware that the modern comparative education cannot limit itself to the research into international experience in schooling and pedagogy. It should seek to reveal global patterns and trends of the development of education in the modern world. However, according by

N. Lavrychenko, “it is necessary, from time to time, to make sure that comparative education is not endowed with improper functions and tasks, such as integration, management, coordination” [2, 17]. According to the researcher, such “vigilance” allows pedagogical comparativistics to work toward scientific truth rather than serve certain political interests.

Unfortunately, in Ukraine, comparative and educational research is focused mainly on the study of international educational experience “through the prism of the national school and pedagogy.” Doctoral dissertations, devoted to comparative and educational issues, address limited research areas, have low prognostic value, and deal mostly with individual pedagogical problems.

The purpose of the article is to undertake a comparative analysis of modern comparative research in the sphere of education, conducted in Ukraine and abroad, and to reveal, on this basis, the common and the special in their nature and research areas.

The proceedings of the 14th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, held in June of 2010 in Istanbul, provided the reference sources for this analysis. The Congress was organized by the World Council of Comparative Education Societies, a reputable international organization established in 1970 in Ottawa (Canada) and composed of four national societies and a regional one. The founder of the World Council was the International Comparative Education Committee, which started its work in 1968 in the University of British Columbia, one of the leading universities of Canada [6, 1].

In 2010, the World Council of Comparative Education Societies celebrated its 40th anniversary and today it consists of 37 associations, including the USA, the UK, France, Argentina, Japan, Germany, South Africa, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Russia, Kazakhstan, and others. Ukraine was the 37th member of the World Council, and we are proud to note that the country is represented by the regional comparative education association created on the basis of Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University.

The World Comparative Education Congresses are held once in three years. The last one, the 14th Congress, took place, as mentioned before, in Istanbul on the basis of Boğaziçi University, the best Turkish university. Although 111 states applied for participation in the Congress, representatives of only 98 countries attended it, bringing the total number of participants to approximately 1.500. They were united by the desire to find ways to improve education as a social institution and to increase the efficiency of educational efforts in the global world.

On the basis of the analysis of the World Congress proceedings, as well as our personal impressions of its work and communications with comparatists from other countries, we were able to identify some differences in the *nature* of comparative studies conducted in Ukraine and abroad.

The first difference. Modern comparative research in education abroad has *interdisciplinary* nature, while in Ukraine they are mostly *monodisciplinary*. Surprising, perhaps, that the discussion about educational issues at the World Congress involved not only and not so much educators, but representatives of other sciences and professions, such as sociologists, philosophers, economists, engineers, psychologists, linguists, historians, managers, etc. In Ukraine, similar issues are usually discussed exclusively by educators, whereas other scholars tend to take pedagogical research with reservations or, at best, with indulgence.

The second difference. Comparative research in Ukraine is of country studies nature, focusing on the pedagogical practices of several, primarily developed, countries. So-called *thematic* comparative studies (devoted to the comparative analysis of the urgent educational issues) prevail abroad. The tendency to country analyses may be explained by the long-time isolation of our scholars behind the “iron curtain” and, to some extent, the stereotype that the best practices can be found only abroad.

Thematic comparative research, as different from country analysis, is carried out at a higher level of generalization, often based on the experience of several countries. As a result, it has a global and more effective influence on the development of education.

The third difference. Strange as it might seem, but comparative research conducted abroad is more *fundamental* and theoretical, thus affecting not only educational practices, but also educational policy. In our country, it is mostly *applied*: descriptive and with the notorious practical significance weighing upon them.

In our opinion, the national comparative education does not take into account the fact that radical changes in the methodology of comparative educational research occurred in the 1990s. Earlier, comparative education, like other liberal arts, viewed the world as a conglomerate of regional societies that were formed historically and existed independently. At the present stage, as Ye. I. Brazhnyk has rightfully mentioned, there emerged the so-called global approach, which caused the transition from the analysis of education within a closed national context to the examination of country's position in the international context [1, 44]. The content of comparative research in the context of globalization and internationalization affects different levels of education, has various micro- and macro-levels of analysis, and combines Individual, Particular, and Universal. The subject of research is primarily the global comparative analysis of education systems in the context of diverse and whole world. In other words, modern methodology of comparative research is characterized by openness, diversity, and the transition from “methodology of Individual” (study of a certain country) to “methodology of Universal” (study of a country-nation in the context of the world educational space).

The differences in the nature and methodology of comparative educational research are expressed, in the first place, in their *research areas*. An interesting analysis of the topics of comparative research in education was conducted by Carlos E. Olivera, a famous Argentinean scientist. He reviewed the reports presented at the 5th and 6th World Comparative Education Congress (Paris, 1984; Rio de Janeiro, 1987), the total number of which exceeded 350. There was a tendency toward the increase in number of scientific reports devoted to “global educational problems”, i.e. fundamental problems (19% of the reports at the congress in Paris and 26% Rio de Janeiro). At that, 13 – 17% of reports were devoted to theory, epistemology, and methodology and about 45%

appeared to be narrow cross-cultural studies limited to descriptions and, sometimes, analysis of an education system, historical process, innovations, or national specifics. Not only did they fail to provide even the slightest comparison, but avoided making any conclusions or hypotheses that could be useful for other countries as well [3, 15]. Carlos E. Olivera believes that applied cross-cultural research usually provides specifically pedagogical view on education and often excludes the possibility of a comprehensive comparative analysis.

The shift toward fundamental comparative studies was evident during the 14th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies as well, which featured approximately 1.400 scientific reports. It is interesting to note that some of the reports submitted by Canadian and British experts were devoted to the analysis of education in modern Ukraine.

The common problem discussed by the participants of the 14th World Congress, was “*Bordering, Re-Bordering and New Possibilities for Change in Education and Society.*”

Apparently, the problem was articulated in general terms, using not pedagogical, but rather sociological terms, which gave the opportunity for scholars from various scientific fields to discuss it.

As for the problem statement, an interesting consideration was expressed by Crain Soudien (Saudi Arabia), who pointed out that it is particularly significant in modern unstable times and will be conducive to identity development. It should clarify the questions regarding the borders between countries and their education systems, as well as borders in our minds and hearts and our sense of similarity and solidarity. Crain Soudien noted that the Congress venue was symbolic because it confirmed and, at the same time, challenged the conventional concepts of East and West, whereas its history is full of contradictions regarding Asian and European identity [4, 5].

According to Fatima Gek (Turkey), the choice of research areas to address during the Congress stands up to the following paradox: worlds that border each other draw the

strength from their own established, manageable, and reproducible differences. She also emphasized that the idea of “the world without borders” should bring about the respect for these differences and acceptance of this diversity. Special attention should be given to the analysis of the area of difference and divergence [4, 6].

The most profound analysis of the issue in question was presented in the report by Susan Robertson, Professor of Sociology of Education from Bristol University (United Kingdom). Her academic career has developed in four countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Great Britain, where she has worked since 1999.

We will refer not only to the published abstract of the British researcher, but also to the lecture that she read for the members of the Congress. First and foremost, Susan Robertson paid attention to the analysis of the concept of “space”, which she defines in broad terms, as something made by human activity and, at the same time, something that conditions this activity. Space is educational if differences are understood, generated, and challenged in it. Furthermore, space is always associated with borders, i.e. limits, and the production and control of space and borders are associated with power and politics, the product of inequality.

Robertson’s view on the ontology of borders is of particular interest. In her opinion, borders in education give the opportunity: a) to exercise pressure and b) provide regulation. Borders are necessary; staying within borders, however, is unwise and dangerous, because it will inevitably lead to degradation.

Globalization gives priority to the problem of re-bordering, i.e. the destruction of borders, which is an aspect of globalization. Susan Robertson believes that, to avoid chaos, opening of borders should be balanced. She sees the mechanism of re-bordering in the following way: first and foremost, the borders within educational establishments should be removed, then - within countries, and, then, - between the countries. This approach is articulated in following statement of hers: before opening the borders for the global space, borders within the country should be removed. Once we learn what is inside, we feel the need to see what is outside.

Susan Robertson believes that a new education strategy, which she calls accelerative, is necessary in the globalized world. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to open the borders between the following systems: state – education – citizen. Robertson identifies four trends that characterize the development of education in the modern world: denationalization, privatization, sectorization, and de-politicization, which contribute to the removal of borders. However, encouraging “the liberating potential of education”, we should be aware of the geopolitical and social consequences of such actions, as well as of possible social risks [4, 21 – 22].

The Congress featured 14 thematic groups, which dealt, from their vantage points, with the issues of bordering in an international perspective.

1. Educational governance, policy within and across borders.
2. Comparative education: Rethinking theory and method.
3. Education, conflict and transitions within and between societies.
4. Demystifying quality in education.
5. Re-imagining curriculum.
6. Critical perspectives in teacher education and development.
7. Identity, space and diversity in education.
8. Education, human and social development, and capabilities.
9. New technologies and accessibility to learning.
10. Education and children's rights in a "globalized" world.
11. Education, politics of dominance, the suppressed and disappearing languages.
12. Privatization and marketization in education.
13. Education, migration, citizenship and the State.
14. Cross-thematic groups (special interest groups / special workshops / symposia / round table).

It is apparent that the research areas of these thematic groups go beyond the content of the national pedagogy and have substantial reasons to be viewed as a subject matter

of so-called “educology” – a scientific discipline that covers all knowledge related to education.

Thus, the comparative analysis of the nature and research areas of comparative research in Ukraine and abroad gives the opportunity to distinguish the common and the special in it.

It should be noted in the first place that, despite having a distinct history and traditions, foreign and national educational comparativistics are aimed at the mutual enrichment of education systems and improvement of education. Another common feature is the interest of comparatists in international cooperation, as modern education has a number of challenges that can be solved only by the scholars from different countries.

Among the most significant differences of foreign comparative research are its interdisciplinary nature, commitment to the analysis of individual educational issues (i.e., it is thematic), fundamental character and high prognostic potential, and the ability to influence the substantiation and implementation of educational strategies. National comparative pedagogical research focuses mainly on the study of the educational experience of individual countries, often in rather specific and insignificant aspects. It is characterized by monodisciplinarity, concern for practical implications of the results, which are to assist in solving the problems of the national educational theory and practice.

Provided that the context of the modern national comparative education is the interconnected and interdependent world, integration into the European and world community, it should rise to a higher level of generalization, join forces with other sciences related to education, and focus on the analytical studies of the system, potential, and functions of education taking into account the position of our country in the global structure.

References

1. **Brazhnik Ye. I.** Osobennosti metodov sravnitel'nykh pedagogicheskikh issledovaniy [The Peculiarities of the Comparative Pedagogical Research]. *Research Culture: Methods, Techniques, and Procedures*. St. Petersburg. 2005. Pp. 47 – 53. (rus)
2. **Lavrychenko N.** Yevropa osvity i porivnyal'na pedahohika v yikh obopil'nomy postupi [Europe of Education and Comparative Pedagogy in their Reciprocal Progress]. *Comparative and Educational Studios*. 2009. No. 1. Pp. 10 – 17. (ukr)
3. **Olivera, C. I.** K teorii sravnitel'noy pedagogiki [Comparative Education: Towards a Basic Theory]. *Prospects. Educational Issues*. 1989. No. 2 (66). Pp. 15 – 30. (rus)
4. **Bordering, Re-Bordering and New Possibilities for Change in Education and Society.** The 14th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, Istanbul, 2010, 14 – 18 June. Istanbul, 2010.
5. **Holmes B.** Trends in Comparative Education. – *Prospects*, v. XV., No. 3, 1985.
6. **Masemann V., Bray M., Manzon M.** Histories of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies and its Members. Hong Kong, 2007.

Курило В. С., Ваховський Л. Ц. Проблеми освіти в контексті сучасних компаративних досліджень (за матеріалами XIV Всесвітнього конгресу з компаративної освіти)

У статті на основі порівняльного аналізу виокремлено спільне й відмінне в характері й проблематиці сучасних вітчизняних і зарубіжних компаративних досліджень. Виявлено та проаналізовано головні тенденції, проблематику та розташування акцентів у дослідженнях вітчизняних та зарубіжних науковців. Схарактеризовано основні питання, розглянуті на XIV Всесвітньому конгресі з порівняльної освіти, розкрито роль порівняльної педагогіки у формуванні єдиного освітнього простору. Автори підкреслюють необхідність розгляду педагогічних

проблем з погляду соціології, філософії, економіки, психології, історії, лінгвістики та інших наукових галузей.

Ключові слова: порівняльна педагогіка, Всесвітня рада співтовариств з порівняльної освіти, Всесвітній конгрес з порівняльної освіти, спільне й відмінне в компаративних дослідженнях.

Курило В. С., Ваховский Л. Ц. Проблемы образования в контексте современных компаративных исследований (по материалам XIV Всемирного конгресса по компаративному образованию)

В статье на основе сравнительного анализа выделено общее и отличное в характере и проблематике отечественных и зарубежных компаративных исследований. Выявлены и проанализированы основные тенденции, проблематика и распределение акцентов в исследованиях отечественных и зарубежных учёных. Охарактеризованы основные вопросы, рассмотренные на XIV Всемирном конгрессе по сравнительному образованию, показана роль сравнительной педагогики в формировании единого образовательного пространства. Авторы подчёркивают необходимость рассмотрения педагогических проблем с точки зрения социологии, философии, экономики, психологии, истории, лингвистики и других научных отраслей.

Ключевые слова: сравнительная педагогика, Всемирный совет сообществ по сравнительному образованию, Всемирный конгресс по сравнительному образованию, общее и отличное в компаративных исследованиях.

Kurylo V. S., Vakhovs'ky L. Ts. Education in the Context of Modern Comparative Research (on the Basis of the Proceedings of the 14th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies)

On the basis of comparative analysis, the article outlines the common and the special in the nature and research areas of Ukrainian and foreign comparative research.

Major trends, research areas, and a focus in the research by Ukrainian and foreign scholars are revealed and analyzed. The core issues, discussed during the 14th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, are characterized. The role of comparative education in the formation of a single educational space is emphasized. The authors underline the need for the discussion of educational issues from the point of view of sociology, philosophy, economics, psychology, history, linguistics, and other academic fields of study.

Key words: comparative education, the World Council of Comparative Education Societies, World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, the common and the special in comparative research.

The article was received by the Editorial Office on 08.10.2012

The article was put into print on 26.10.2012