

# Pedagogical Potential of the Slavic Cultures and Its Importance for the XXI Century Youth

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## ABSTRACT

**This article expounds on the crucial component of culture of the Slavs (truth, conciliarism, pan-unity) and points out the advent of youth projects ("Envoys of the Young Slavs", Diplomatic School, Republic of Slovakia), festivals (of Serbian poetry and songs) and other activities aimed at preservation of languages and cultures. The article explores expertise of the elective courses at the Pushkin State Russian Language Institute in the field of cross-cultural connections, emphasizes the pedagogical potential of the Slavic cultures which ensures preservation of national identity in the frame of on-going globalization and digitalization.**

**Keywords:** globalization, technogenic type of culture, culture of the Slavs, educational potential, identity, youth projects

## I. INTRODUCTION

The on-going globalization and digitalization, informational revolutions, rise in cross-country migration flows, heightening tensions between nations and spiritual crises are the key challenges faced by humanity in the first decades of the XXI century. These processes force the nations to aspire for preservation of national identity and identification of their place in global civilization.

It is common knowledge that technocratic mentality boosts pragmatic approach towards education and upbringing, diminishes such personal traits as emotional sensibility and empathy that significantly undermines sociability of a person and his/her ability to put the surrounding world in perspective, eventually leading to spiritual and psychological crises.

It is the culture that contributes greatly to the balanced character education and creates value-based attitude to life. The latter should be defined as personal attitude to the surrounding world that is manifested on the basis of a person's knowledge and understanding of the environment and his/her personal life experience, that is also aimed at achieving perfect existence. [1]

## II. THE NEED FOR INTEGRATION OF CULTURAL APPROACH INTO EDUCATION AND UPBRINGING

The integration processes in the mass culture of the XXI century made the application of cultural approach towards education and pedagogics a priority.

Firstly, it can be accounted for by the nature of pedagogics as science that constantly develops the objects of humanities knowledge (man, society, culture). The nature of education would therefore depend on the historical cultural forms and principally on the value-based orientations.

Secondly, pedagogics should also be viewed as an integral part of the culture that explores consistent patterns in the purposeful transmission of social experience from generation to generation. We would like to point out that Russian scientist S.I. Hessen defined the goals of education and upbringing as key priority of the society, with an aim of culture creation, i.e. erudition, civic consciousness, civility [2]. This scientist believed that value-based orientation is the cornerstone component of culture. Thus, mastering of culture becomes unquenchable process, making the life goals equal to the goals of education.

It is hard to dispute the statement made by S.I. Hessen regarding the close interconnection between the notions of culture, history, philosophy and pedagogics. For instance, history can be viewed as description of humanity's past, accumulated during elaboration of cultural values. The latter therefore become the goals of education. [3]

These considerations may be viewed as confirming the application of cultural approach towards education and pedagogics, making it possible to determine peculiarities of various educational paradigms, as well as contribute to the creation of the personal inner world

of a pupil on the basis of proper self-orientation in and perception of the world of culture and its values.

Development of the sense of humanism is one of the major components of education. We would like to point out that German philosopher J.G. Herder considered the man to be the highest being with understanding of the spirit of humanism and religion as his life purpose manifestation. Empathy and compassion are vital traits that manifest through communication and family relations. [4] The scientist warned its readers that society "... both upper and lower classes would plummet back to animal state..." should nurturing of humanism stall for any reason [5]. There is no reason to doubt the fact that issues of upbringing can be effectively solved through dialogue of cultures which should be viewed as having the following characteristics: the subject is represented by cultural facts; interpretation of these facts is the product and its goal lies in the field of gaining understanding between cultures.

### **III. EDUCATIONAL AND VALUE-BASED POTENTIAL OF THE CULTURE OF THE SLAVS**

Culture of the Slavs plays a significant role in upbringing. The Slavic set of values (love, beauty, good, truth, family, nation, culture, Motherland, nature, world, life, happiness, righteousness, honor, dignity, conscience, responsibility etc.) form the basis for the spiritual world of a person. One can name "truth" (as a combination of intrinsic truth and righteousness) and "conciliarism" (as a balance between individual freedom and unity, affection towards own country, nature and family) as the foundation principals of the culture of the Slavs.

For instance, "truth" should be considered as a criterion for evaluation of personal and social life while "conciliarism" is the harmonized equilibrium between freedom and unity of people and can be achieved through mutual affection to the above-mentioned absolute values.

The notion of "conciliarism" was introduced by the Slavophile A.S. Khomyakov and is synonymous with such notion as "pan-unity". S.L. Frank, a Russian philosopher, stated that pan-unity should be considered as state of relationship between the man and the world, which embodies the ideals of conciliarism.

The man and the world are represented as "emerging pan-unity" which brings into balance individual and plenty by surmounting totalitarianism and individualism... pan-unity manifests as pan humanism and openness to everything new [6]. These notions are closely related to the concept of character education. We would like to note that A.S. Khomyakov defined the notion of "upbringing" as "...transmission of all moral and intellectual foundations from one

generation to another" [7]. As pointed out earlier, it is culture that might act as such intermediary for interpolation of value-based principal to the youth.

### **IV. INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PROJECTS AS MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF THE CULTURE OF THE SLAVS**

Interconnections between Slavic nations have been existing for a long time and have been developing with various pace. Such cooperation in different fields has been in motion for a long time, largely in the field of culture and education.

As pointed out earlier and stated by numerous politicians and scientists, the issue of preservation of national identity of the Slavic nations, spirituality of the youth and formation of the holistic attitude towards the surrounding world can be solved through dialogue between different cultures. L. Orban, the first Commissioner for Multilingualism in the EU declared that it is of paramount importance to make the youth interested in their own languages, history and culture to have their personal potential fully developed [8]. That is why the EU currently faces the necessity to preserve national languages, promote these languages and the Slavic culture among the younger generation via much broader use of such channels as Internet, TV, etc.

There is significant number of international festivals dedicated to the promotion of the culture of the Slavs: International Festival of Arts "Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk"; annual Czech culture Festival in the Russian State Library with support from the Embassy of the Czech Republic and Czech Centre in Moscow; Days of Croatia, Slovakia, Serbia that take place on the annual basis in different regions of Russia with support from the cultural centres of these Slavic nations and Russian state institutions.

However, it should be underlined, that the initiative largely originates from the students themselves (i.e. from the "bottom") as they understand the current issues and try to elaborate potential solutions with their peers. For instance, the students of SÚKromnÉ SlovanskÉ Gymnasium (SSG) from Bratislava (Republic of Slovakia) established a project "Envoys of the Young Slavs: problems and ways to solve them". This project became quite popular not only in Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic and Russia. Its participants range from scientists and cultural luminaries to students and pupils from Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia. The purpose of the project is to unite Slavic youth from different countries for mutually beneficial collaboration. The goals and objectives were presented by student of SSG at the international forum called "Russia and Slavic nations: shifting eras", which takes place on the annual basis at the Moscow House of Nations. It is organized

by the Centre for Academic Contacts of the Tolstoy Institute of Languages and Cultures.

In 2019 this forum united students from SSG (city of Bratislava, Republic of Slovakia), students of the city of Užice (Republic of Serbia), students from the Zagreb University (Croatia) and pupils of Moscow schools. The participants managed not only to present their own projects, but also elaborate on a number of issues presented by other participants.

The SSG has a number of platforms that provide for broad discussion in national Slavic languages across a wide spectrum of topics, ensuring not only open environment to express opinion, but also a unique opportunity to learn and practice a foreign language.

The platform "Diplomatic club" (community of the SSG students) and "Envoys of the Young Slavs" unite students from a number of different Slavic nations (and representatives of other nations as well). They provide for much better understanding of each other. SSG provides course in the Polish, Croatian, Slovenian and Russian languages through a wide range of WEB-based applications as effective means for student motivation. It is evident that such meetings allow for much better communication between students (mutual understanding), provide opportunity to gain negotiation skills and motivate the youth to expand their knowledge in the Slavic languages, history and culture.

It is worth mentioning yet another initiative presented by the Community for Russia-Serbia Friendship. For the last 10 years the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Russia has been supporting the annual festival "Serbia in my heart...", which aim is to develop and broaden the mutual interest in poetry and vocal traditions of Serbian and Russian people as well as the cultural heritage objects of Serbia [9].

The public interest grows each year: the first festival in 2010 saw only 43 participants, which in 2019 the number leaped to 1200, represented by pupils of comprehensive schools, gymnasiums, college students and students from such cities as Barnaul, Belgorod, Dolgoprudniy, Kaluga, Kostroma, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Stavropol, Saransk, Ryazan, as well as Gomel (Belarus).

The festival is subdivided into the following nominations: dramatic reading of Serbian poetry classics (J. Dudic, S. Stefanovich, R. Zogovich, D. Sladoe, M. Rakic and others), signing, translation from Serbian into Russian of folklore and classic literature. It is important to underline that the festival is supported by the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary to Russia, doctor, professor Slavenko Terzich. He called the festival "one of the brightest events supported by the Embassy". Participants were greeted by Serbian poets: Ljubica Miletic, Liljana Habyanovich – Djurovic,

students and pedagogues of the Belgrade University, poet and interpreter A. Parpara and others.

Thanks to this festival the Russian pupils managed to get acquainted with the unique world of Serbian culture, Greek history, literature, music; many expressed their desire to learn Serbian language. The festival "Serbia in my heart" represents a perfect example of the growing interest towards Serbia, its language and culture. All these projects testify to the fact of rising interest of the youth in national history, language and culture.

## **V. STUDY OF THE CULTURE OF THE SLAVS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF MOSCOW**

Tailored elective courses play crucial role in the promotion and motivation for learning national languages and cultures. For instance, A.I.Yevdokimov Moscow State University of Medicine and Dentistry has a student community dedicated to studying of the culture of the Slavs, with a popular vocal ensemble performs Slavic songs (Director – Y.G.Morozova c.p.s.). In 2006-2016 Pushkin State Russian Language University had a number of elective courses included into the curriculum: "Russia and Slavs abroad: philosophical, historic and cultural aspects of interaction", "Dialogue of Slavic Cultures", "Russian themes in the Culture of the Slavs", "Interdependencies of Slavic Cultures", "Category of the Beauty in the Culture of Southern and Eastern Slavs (Middle Ages) (author: Bondarenko N.A. Phd in Pedagogic studies) [11].

The basic foundation of these courses can be described as both broadening student understanding of the unique aspects of culture, but also providing insight into the "history of interconnection" (L. Kishkin) between Russia and Slavic nations throughout different historic periods. Methodological and philosophical basis for these special courses was based on the dialogue concept proposed by M.M. Bakhtin, which reveals deep interconnection between language and culture; V.M. Djirmunskiy concept [10]; civilization sphere concept of "cultural dialogue" (as methodology of historical and cultural analysis of different education paradigms, evolution of their interconnections and uncovering of the world view) of S.I. Hessen; the concept of language personality (U.N. Karaulov, V.P. Furmanov et al), as well as the idea of Slavic mutuality (Y. Kollar).

By getting becoming immersed into different aspects of culture the students were able to get a glimpse of largely unknown aspects of their Motherland, the history of which is closely related with the names of Byelorussian scholar Simeon from Polotsk, Eduard Napravnik (Czech), Jan Chersky, and Bronislav

Pilsudski (Poles), Dushan Makovitsky from Slovakia and others.

These courses are interesting for students from Moldavia, Romania, China, Serbia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Vietnam and Hungary, providing for much better understanding of the Russian and Russia.

In their studies ("Literary life of the Ukrainian intelligentsia in Prague (2nd 3rd decade of the XX century)", "The image of the jester Palechek in Russian and Czech literature", "The image of the Motherland in the poetry of Yevgeny Malanyuk", "Music of the Czech soul (Czech poetry translated by K. Balmont)", "Russian-Slovak cultural ties of the XIX-XX centuries (the relevance of the idea of Slavic reciprocity in the era of globalization)", "On the history of Czech translations by A.A. Fet" and others) the students expounded upon their viewpoint at the annual Cyril and Methodius Readings. The section was attended by students from Moscow Pedagogical State University, Moscow State University, St. Petersburg State University and students from Poland, Slovakia, Belarus, Serbia, Ukraine and other countries. The above testifies to the fact that students gain broader understanding of importance of preservation of national cultures as well as promote further cooperation with youth from overseas.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the trend of pragmatic approach towards education and upbringing, spiritual crises and negative processes that take place in the modern society, there are certain positive trends in the youth community that can be interpreted as attempts to preserve national identity, culture and language. The project "Envoys of the Young Slavs" (Republic of Slovakia) that unites Slavic youth, and festival "Serbia in my heart" can be considered as examples of such positive trends. The issue of promotion of the original cultural heritage of the Slavic nations as part of the European and global culture, as well as interconnections between cultures of the Slavs are being examined within the framework of elective courses at the Pushkin State Russian Language Institute, A.I. Yevdokimov Moscow State University of Medicine and Dentistry and others.

These projects represent a perfect example of the youth worldview development potential, preservation of the inherited memory, empathy, spiritual compassion and conciliarism – all the traits that are distinctive of the culture of the Slavs.

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