

THE ROLE OF TURKISH EDUCATIONAL CULTURE IN DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Shodiyeva Shohsanam Furqatovna

Independent Researcher (PhD)

at the Research Center for the Development of Higher Education

of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Annotation: With the recent migration worldwide, different cultures have begun to live together. This situation has led to the emergence of various concepts such as multiculturalism, interculturalism, and sensitivity to cultural values. When these concepts are examined, it is revealed that there are some similarities and differences between them. The purpose of this study is to examine the concepts of multiculturalism, interculturalism, and sensitivity to cultural values and to reveal the similarities and differences between them by addressing these concepts from an educational perspective. The conceptual scanning model was used in the research. When the concepts were examined in terms of Turkish educational culture, it was observed that many people prefer to live in harmony with the local culture rather than concentrating in a certain region. Therefore, there is intercultural interaction. When viewed from this perspective, it can be said that the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism are more appropriate than the concepts of culturalism. In order for students studying in Turkey, which has very different cultures, to be equipped with high-level skills, to have universal values, to understand and respect differences, educational policies that are sensitive to cultural values should be developed and implemented. As a result, when multicultural structures are considered together, it can be said that there is a need for education that is sensitive to cultural values in terms of combating inequality, discrimination, alienation, social integration and creating integration awareness in students.

Key words: Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, Sensitivity to Cultural Values, Education, Difference, time.

The recent emergence of migrations has resulted in communities with different cultural structures living together. While these new communities interacted with local communities in some places, they remained distant in other places and preserved their own cultures. Various changes have occurred in communities with this transition from locality to universality. Different concepts have emerged to express this diversity along with the cultural diversity that has emerged. Concepts such as multiculturalism, interculturality, and being sensitive to cultural values are among the most commonly used concepts. When the literature is examined, it is seen that different definitions have been made regarding these concepts. However, similarities between the concepts are also striking. While some discussions argue that these two concepts actually cover each other (Nieto, 2006), some argue that they are completely different (Holm and Zilliacus, 2009). The first difference that emerges in the use of the two concepts is in their

geographical use. For example, while the concept of intercultural is used in Europe, the concept of multicultural is used in America, Australia and Asia (Hill, 2007). Even the use of concepts varies in European countries, while Sweden and the Netherlands prefer cultural services, England prefers multicultural applications in terms of finance (Holm and Zilliacus, 2009). The most concepts are in the field of education at the beginning of the production sector. The reason for this is how the education process should be in the new cultural structure that has emerged. A separate discussion can be presented about which concept should be used to express the education of differences in this new process. Cultural differences that emerge in the society have values that are shaped by the meaning attributed to differences in the external inclusion of education. For this reason, the concepts of multicultural education, intercultural education and education sensitive to cultural values should be analyzed, the diversity and differences of these concepts should be revealed and importance should be given to the perspective of cultural integration in education. Culture was first used as a root in relation to agriculture (Mejuyev, 1987, p.22; Akt. Oğuz, 2011). Culture change entered English in the 15th century and was used in the meanings of farming and observation of natural growth.

The word culture has also included human development since the 16th century. Since the 19th century, culture has been defined as all intellectual, artistic, technical, philosophical productions and assets that constitute the unity of thought and value of a human community (Özlem, 2000; Cited: Oğuz, 2011). Today, culture is generally defined as a set of assumptions and values shared by a group of people, affecting but not determining the behaviors and interpretations of each person in the group. (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). Culture has been defined by UNESCO as “a whole consisting of the combination of distinct material, spiritual, mental and emotional characteristics that define a society or a social group and a phenomenon that encompasses not only science and literature but also lifestyles, basic human rights, value judgments, traditions and beliefs” (UNESCO, 1982; Cited: Oğuz, 2011). According to these definitions, culture can be defined as a lifestyle resulting from shared values and beliefs specific to a social group. Accordingly, the values that emerge as a result of the interaction of all individuals in society constitute culture.

The concept of multiculturalism first emerged in Canada in the context of disagreements over the use of English and French languages. These events, which developed in the 1960s in Canada, later continued to be discussed in terms of issues such as nations and ethnic origins. Although multiculturalism is a concept that is based on culture and includes the word culture, according to Gorski (2006), it is a political value rather than a cultural value. The concept emerged as a political outcome for communities to live in harmony with each other as a result of discussions between the province of Quebec and other provinces in Canada. The dominance of English Canadians and French Canadians pushed the country towards a multicultural policy. The aim of this policy was to create a Canadian identity consisting of individuals with the same status (Doytcheva, 2009). According to Journet (2009), in the mid-1960s, federal authorities in Ottawa resolved the French and English conflicts by making Canadian societies multicultural. In the 1970s, Pierre-Elliot Trudeau turned this into a program and put it forward. In addition, the emergence of this idea in the United States led to the development of awareness that the rights of the majority were not given to minorities and that there was an injustice in this situation. As a result of these developments, it was interpreted as the creation of the necessary policies and programs for different cultures to continue their existence together.

There are three main forms of multiculturalism. These are **symbolic, structural** and **communicative** multiculturalism.

In symbolic multiculturalism, the characteristics that define the community such as celebrations, clothing, food and music of the communities within the country are allowed to live. These characteristics are taught through schools and introduced through cultural centers. The aim is to help preserve cultural differences.

In structural multiculturalism, the focus is on overcoming political, economic and social inequalities. Taking precautions against discrimination, providing socio-economic assistance and providing systematic education are included in structural multiculturalism. It is the establishment of structures and processes under state control that ensure that members of minority groups are treated fairly and equally.

In communicative multiculturalism, it is expected to exhibit a stance that is very different from others. The necessity of providing intercultural communication in a multicultural structure is stated. The characteristic of communicative multiculturalism is that it assumes the unifying role of the society. It is necessary to create a common commitment and make it a principle (Barrett, 2013).

There are various supports and criticisms regarding multiculturalism. According to Canadian Icon (2007), the supports given to multiculturalism are as follows; it is a successful model, it is a part of the Canadian identity, it protects unity and solidarity. The criticisms given are as follows; it is vague, it focuses on majority rights, and it is ethnocentric. Aldridge, Calhoun and Aman (2000) stated the criticisms regarding the studies conducted on multiculturalism as follows.

- Even if there are the same elements such as nationality, region, religion, language, individuals who share these elements may have different cultures. There are individuals who speak the same language but have different cultures within a country.

- Even if they come from a family with the same culture, two different individuals in the same family may have different values. Two siblings growing up in the same family may have different values.

- Incorrect information about individuals in a book belonging to a culture different from the individual's own culture may cause that culture to be misunderstood. There are many examples of books that describe different cultures and cause the culture to be misunderstood because they provide incorrect information.

- Differences do not only include ethnic and racial differences. However, gender and socioeconomic dimensions are among the most important differences.

Multicultural education is an education that ensures that everyone benefits from education equally, regardless of differences such as **religion, language, race, gender, and age** (Banks and Banks, 2009). Multicultural education advocates the right to equal education for everyone (Banks, 1995), approaches differences with respect in education, and is based on democratic values (Ameny Dixon, 2004). Gay (1994) defined multicultural education as

"education that ensures that each individual has equal access to education, recognizes and respects different cultures, enables individuals to communicate with different cultures, includes alternative teaching materials and programs for students with cultural differences, and primarily enables individuals to become aware of themselves and develop." Parekh (2000) defined multicultural education as educational activities carried out with the aim of intellectual curiosity, self-criticism, being able to evaluate claims or evidence independently and make decisions, respecting others, being respectful of different ideas and moving away from an ethnocentric understanding. According to Gezi (1981, Cited in Demir, 2012), multicultural education is an education that equalizes the educational opportunities of culturally different students, tries to understand and protect cultural differences and helps students to do business in different cultures.

INTERCULTURALITY AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION While the multicultural understanding generally emerges as granting social rights and providing opportunities for minority cultures to live in an egalitarian understanding, the interaction of minority cultures with other majority cultures has been ignored and left to the wishes of the minority culture. For this reason, the concept of interculturality has emerged with the view that the multicultural understanding is inadequate. This development, especially in the European continent, has drawn attention to the fact that minority groups, instead of remaining in their own regions, are involved in interaction and communication by mixing with the majority society. It has been accepted by the European Assembly with various studies and is envisaged to be implemented as a policy in the European continent (Barret, 2013). The key feature of the concept of interculturality is openness, communication and interaction. A framework is used in which interaction and communication are prevented with multiculturalism, while in the concept of interculturality, the fluidity of culture will be restored to its former fluid state. The respect that lies at the core of multicultural understanding has changed to communication and interaction in intercultural understanding. Although they seem to be two concepts used in the same sense, there are various differences (James, 2008).

Since interculturality emphasizes the communication and interaction of cultures, it varies in terms of all cultures' acceptance of the state and their sense of belonging.

THE SITUATION IN TURKEY It is observed that the concept used in Turkey regarding the togetherness of different cultures is multiculturalism. When the literature is examined, it is observed that the studies conducted (Cırık, 2008; Demircioğlu and Özdemir, 2014; Gencer, 2011; Kararımak, 2008; Polat, 2009; Polat, 2012; Tekinalp, 2005; Ünlü and Örtten, 2013) are mostly conducted in terms of multiculturalism. The reason for this is seen as Turkey's attitude towards minorities. The concept of multiculturalism comes to the agenda in Turkey as Islamists or Kurds. In addition, the existence of Turks as a community abroad should also be taken into consideration. Germany in particular stands out as the country that receives the most immigration from abroad. The fact that countries that send a lot of immigration abroad, such as Turkey, generally want to maintain the loyalty of their citizens through identity or religion and try to prevent assimilation is also included in the concept of multiculturalism (Kastoryano, 2018). The criticism that Turkey has adopted a policy of being a homogeneous nation with a single culture since its establishment and that it has been governed in an oppressive and authoritarian manner by turning this into a state policy (Ekinci, 1999) also shows that multicultural policies are not adopted. The criticisms made are generally that there is



a superior and dominant identity in Turkey and that this culture is in favor of assimilating other cultures. Although citizens of various countries have migrated to Turkey from the past to the present, multiculturalism has been presented in a different way due to the impact of the major immigration crisis after the civil war in Syria. Although there are concerns that multicultural education practices cause Turkey to wear down and disrupt the state structure (Ekinçi, 1999), the concept of multicultural education continues to be used in Turkey. However, studies on multiculturalism clearly reveal the multicultural structure in Turkey. The most spoken languages can be ranked as Turkish, Kurdish and Arabic. There are also other spoken languages. In terms of religion, there are religions believed to be Muslim, Christian and Jewish, while it is also seen that there are distinctions such as Sunni and Alevi within Islam (KONDA, 2006). Turkey is expected to take these differences into consideration in the field of education within the framework of the European Union harmonization laws. Various concepts, projects, programs or activities related to immigrants who are currently in Turkey or who will settle in Turkey in the future should be diversified, teacher development models should be created, education and training materials should be developed and various policies that will meet the needs of immigrants' problems (Cırık, 2008) will contribute to the coexistence of different cultures. At this point, instead of conflicting, alienating and excluding those who are different, it is important to develop a common language of communication within equal rights and increase interaction.

As a result, when multicultural structures are considered together, it can be said that there is a need for education that is sensitive to cultural values in terms of combating inequality, discrimination, alienation, social integration and creating an awareness of integration in students. Sensitivity to cultural values means living in a way that is respectful of differences without alienating minority communities (Gay, 2002). As can be understood from here, education that is sensitive to cultural values is necessary education not only for students of minority communities but also for the whole society.

The inclusion of culturally sensitive practices in education policies in Turkey will help the multicultural structure that exists in society to integrate with each other. Since the source of all studies to be conducted is the teacher, who is the implementer of education, it is important to equip teachers with educational models that are sensitive to cultural values. Instead of elective courses, at least one compulsory course will develop the teacher's skills in this regard, and if necessary, teachers will continue to develop their skills through in-service training. In addition, creating educational curricula that are sensitive to cultural values for students in schools will ensure that students see these differences as a richness. On top of all this, a well-studied and well-functioning educational policy should be created.

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