

THE ETHICAL PARADIGM/DIMENSION OF EDUCATION WITHIN THE CURRENT SOCIETAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT: *The Ethical Paradigm/Dimension of Education within the Current Societal Framework.*

The material on the topic under analysis addresses the ethical dimension of education within the contemporary societal framework, focusing on the interplay between educational practices and the moral imperatives that emerge from current social, political, and cultural challenges. In an era that is marked by the advent of e-learning, increasing inequality, and globalized interconnectivity, the ethical responsibilities as regards various facets of learning insight have become more complex and cogent. The ethical dimension of education within the contemporary societal framework is multifaceted and complex.

Keywords: *ethics, education, globalization, societal framework, equity, educational philosophy.*

Introduction

The ethical dimension of education has a long history, dating back to the works of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Confucius that emphasized the importance of virtue and moral development in educational settings. In Western philosophy, figures like John Dewey argued for education that nurtures democratic values and social responsibility. Similarly, in non-Western traditions, education has often been seen as a means of fostering moral integrity and social cohesion.

Over time, the relationship between education¹ and its context has been explored from various perspectives. From one viewpoint, opened by

¹ Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe, "Current Values of Education and Culture", in *Proceedings of the 23th International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*, August 15-16, 2021, Princeton, NJ, United States of America, pp. 87-92.

the constructivist perspective with the corresponding representatives Bateson, Piaget, Watzlawick, it is acknowledged that, since society is the product of the objective and subjective constructions of individuals, and each individual self is a product of learning, the context—meaning the national and industrial society of the education system—would merely be the final result of education that has stimulated and directed individual learning. In other words, the elements of the context would be the products of individual constructions previously shaped by education, while society would be the nascent expression of the education practiced within it. A different approach, eminently causal, suggests a society whose components would each have their own involvement.

Interaction takes the form of a complex interplay of reciprocal expectations, where individuals construct their identity within and through the interpersonal system and in the context of social actions. It is a complex process in which social reality is shaped through intercomprehension, according to the scholar Bange.

The nature of communication is directly influenced by the social context in which the interaction takes place. Notwithstanding the possibility of applying a single rule, the same social context can enact a different role depending on the nature, complexity, and, last but not least, the purpose of the interaction. The emergence of new technologies, the mode of existence has changed, and work has been restructured, with computerization taking a central role in the individual's life, while communication has become ambiguous and contradictory in its effects: „[...] individuals are subjected to an unprecedented flow of images and sounds[...] annihilating the distinction between reality and the media image, simultaneously producing new forms of experience and subjectivity.”²

The definitions of communication, depending on the field, convey a particular, specialized meaning, sometimes in contradiction with the definitions used in other domains, thus conceptualizing structures of domination and resistance whereas the hidden forms of communication that can serve as tools for social, political, economic, and other forms of change. Communication requires a constant process of scrutiny precisely because of the pace and intensity of the changes it entails.

2 Kellner, Douglas, *Cultura media (Media culture)*, Iasi, Editura Institutul European, 2001, p.29.

In some measure, the term „communication” also entails the meaning of „communion,” which implies that „to communicate” involves a direct form of association and „sharing” the problems of individuals. The difficulties faced by societies that lack the necessary experience to manage economic and cultural pluralisms can only be overcome if these societies are willing to embrace a new „philosophy of boundaries,” less dominated by the interest in difference and more focused on the idea of harmonizing vital interests, whatever they may be. Thus, the reality and setting of political life express the cognitive divides arising from differentiated access to information and the unequal activity of media agents in society. In this context, political language plays a decisive role. Where language triumphs, meaning „mere talk,” authentic political change cannot occur. Language is, regardless of the political regime in which it is used, the most expressive form of representing power relations and the ideal tool for controlling public opinion. Beyond words there are fixed images, which encapsulate culturally established meanings.

Communication must therefore be interpreted differently, contextualized with regard to the specificity of subjects as it designates an essential component of life that ought to be correctly understood in order to achieve its goals, thus explaining social realities and influence. Theorists argue that, in the actual frame of reference as regards new technologies, it should be seen as a form of rupture from traditional patterns. Moreover, the concept of „communication” is at the heart of cultural studies precisely due to the impact communication has on individuals. First and foremost, communication requires a form of „literacy” for decoding the message, involving the existence of pre-established and explained codes.

The issues of individualism, social anomie, trust in others, and the mechanisms of cooperation are themes that sociology has addressed since its beginnings as a social science. Reflection on such topics inevitably leads to aspects related to the rules or norms existing in society, to the relationships the individual has with their group, and, on a broader scale, to the connections between the individual and the community.³

The study of the community is largely also the study of communicational processes, based on two main arguments: one related to theoretical

³ Balaban, Delia Cristina; Hosu, Ioan, *Society and communication*, București, Editura Tritonic, 2009.

and conceptual aspects, and the latter concerning the natural evolution, in parallel, of these two processes or social realities. The study of power relations, mechanisms of cooperation or conflict, interpersonal relations, or intra- and inter-group relations are, essentially, parts of what is called the study of communicational processes. Via the apprehension in relation to the mechanisms of functioning in community spaces is essential for understanding how communicational processes and modus unfold at the individual or group level. Moreover, within major currents of sociological thought, theories from the communicational field are present, starting with Fernand Tönnies and continuing through representatives of British Cultural Studies. Each of the groups or schools of sociological thought has emphasized the importance of communication in the processes of community construction or reconstruction.⁴

Community realities are sustained by communicational relationships; videlicet, human communities are formed alongside the manifestation of social interchange processes. The annotation of the concepts of communication and community brings with it common elements, namely: cooperation, conflict, awareness/comprehension, and assimilation.⁵

People/state and society encompass more than just competitive cooperation; community includes elements that are meant to sustain identity through solidarity and a shared vision. In current social reality there are new spaces for sociability as well as different types of communities. Even though, the social reality best illustrates how communication sets or configures community spaces is public opinion, which is designated as one of the many examples supporting the substantive connections between communication and community—connections that strongly manifest in the context where new forms of communication generate new types of communities. The interchange of ideas, concepts has to be differently, contextualized interpreted due to the fact according to which it explains social realities and enabling the individual to comprehend the outside world. An insight in point of conveying ideas takes into consideration a mélange of concepts, images, symbols, arguments, and judgements with the aim of a

4 Dobrescu P.; Bârgăoanu, A.; Corbu, N., *History of Communication*, București, Editura Comunicare.ro, 2007, p.43.

5 Zani, B, Palmonari, A. (coord.), *Community Psychology Handbook*, Iasi, Editura Polirom, 2003, p.31.

concrete conclusiveness. Specialized communication has included over the course of time dissimilar cultural studies, even feminism, adding multicultural and political elements.

Politics plays a significant role in shaping educational systems, policies, and practices, and individuals, as the recipients of these systems, are often at the center of political debates and decisions. From the allocation of resources to curriculum choices, and from the political leanings of educators to the influence of governmental policies, the intersection of politics and education may have profound effects on the learning experiences and the corresponding ability to access equitable education.

The role of politics in education raises several ethical concerns related to freedom of expression, political bias, access to educational resources, and the ability to critically engage with societal issues.

The ethical challenge lies in ensuring that education systems provide a well-rounded, unbiased, and comprehensive education, with multiple perspectives on key historical, political, and social issues. Educators have the moral responsibility to foster critical thinking by encouraging the examination of these issues from a variety of angles and allowing them to form their own opinions based on evidence rather than political ideology.

The intersection of politics and education is fraught with ethical challenges that affect how subjects learn, engage with others, and express views.

Both political influence on curriculum and freedom of expression in political activism present critical ethical challenges in education. While the internet has democratized access to information, it has also led to the rise of misinformation, which has profound implications in terms of political issues. In light of the proliferation of fake news, there are significant ethical concerns regarding the role of education⁶ in preparing individuals to navigate this information landscape.

The endorse of media literacy, critical thinking, and open political dialogue, educational institutions can help safeguard the ethical responsibility of students to engage thoughtfully with the world around them. Media literacy is a vital skill in today's information-rich world, thus endowing

⁶ Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe, "Valences of Education", in *Proceedings of the 23th International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*, August 15-16, 2021, Princeton, NJ, United States of America, pp. 190-196.

with the tools to critically evaluate the vast array of content they encounter online, including the act of identifying fake news, recognizing bias, and understanding how news can be shaped by political agendas.

The role of the media varies depending on the nature of society, similar to social institutions it assays for stability; however, the inherent contradictions within the relation between their sociocultural function – as agents of social discourse – and the status as providers of information and knowledge are the difference.⁷

Context has gained particular importance in contemporary sciences, where it acquires various denominations, representing a symbolic space that is constructed in the intersubjective rapport with the other and with others, a space of social relations, where society itself is organized, along with interrelated/ correlative structures, conventions, forces, rituals, collective representations, and culture. The context acts upon the individual, and the individual, in turn, transforms and constructs it being a social field – a set of symbolic systems, structures, and practices that possess indispensable codes for communication: the code of language, the symbolism of space, and the overall framework that organizes interactions/confluence. In a broad sense, the notion of *context* is to relate to particular coaxial elements that, to a certain extent, might alter the use and interpretation with regard to the frame of reference, namely ample cultural values and expectations, past experience and current loquacious intentions as morphemes/ idioms evoke nuances and associations from specific practical knowledge that reflect the history of corresponding use.⁸

The perspective on language and communication refers to the means of acting upon the other, influencing them, or simple practices. The issue of the act of communication and the act of language involves a more complex phenomena, whereas the communicative interaction generates knowledge, intersubjectivity, language, and discourse. Individuals use language to interact with people for some purposes: one may want to influence their attitudes or behavior, or to provide information that do not know, or to explain attitudes or behavior, or to get them to take some actions, and so on.

7 Lohisse, Jean, *Communication - From mechanical transmission to inteaction*, Iasi, Editura Polirom, 2002, p. 89.

8 Maybin, J.; Mercer, N., & Hewings, A., *Using English*, The Open University, 2007, p.13.

Human development⁹ is closely linked to human choice. The transition from traditional societies to modern ones has increased decision-making capacity and strengthened the role of individual choice in social life.¹⁰ Current educational trends and challenges in respect of expanding access to educational opportunities and relevance of learning has determined that the language adjust to the necessities of present system of assuming perspectives, nuances in accordance with an environment being submitted to correspond to an analytical picture of a particular requirements/application on texts.

The world is shaped by the ongoing interactions of its actors, a continuity that gives rise to a „game of appearances” and a symbolic exchange that mirrors social hierarchies and differences, prestige, recognition, respect, and admiration—ultimately, a continuous process of organizing and reordering societal values. Every individual dons the „mask” of value, and everyone is indebted to the perceptions others have of them, shaped by the highly conventionalized game that all play daily. This intricate game of appearances, blending images of reality and subjective perceptions, embodies the essence of the political sphere, the „stage” where various historical actors perform, while the general structure remains unchanged.

The target of social life involves actors and interpreters of roles, without whom society would cease to exist. However, in order for this to happen, each individual has had to conventionally shape their actions, to the point where „signs” have proven to be more effective than their corresponding „the core significance”. Language represents „the most complex of known semiotic systems. Its importance for defining and understanding the human condition is decisive. Its ability to produce and interpret specific signs endowed with meaning bestows upon humans a privileged status in the known world, as the primary reflective and projective beings. [...] Human language, as a communication process, involves three fundamental and defining dimensions: an ontological dimension, an epistemological dimension, and a social dimension”¹¹

9 Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe, “Aspects of Biblical Philosophy on the Development of World Civilizations”, *Scientia Moralitas. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 8 (2023), nr.1, pp. 62-79.

10 Zamfir, Cătălin; Stoica, Laura, *A new challenge: Social evolution*, Iasi, Editura Polirom, 2006. p. 133.

11 Munteanu, Eugen, *Introduction in linguistics*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2005. p. 197.

Unless the required correlations are drawn, the necessary correlations between language and the social context of a specific community, informed by historical and empirical realities, neither language nor social foundations can be considered the basis of communication and existence. Language possesses a unique attribute: as Benveniste noted, it serves as the interpreter (or mediator) of society and any signifying system. However, in contemporary society, the globalization¹² of culture has led to its standardization and impoverishment, phenomena that have permeated every domain of cultural activity.

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