

THE AWARENESS OF AUDIOVISUAL AND CULTURAL REALITY OF FUTURE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION TEACHERS

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Abstract. *Current cultural paradigm, founded on audiovisuality, creates new hierarchy, sets its own rules, brings dislocation on the stage of social communication, institutes new semiotic code, redefines the anthropological interpretation of a human being, at the same time generating different possibilities and different needs of a child at the elementary level of education. If one is to accept the assertion, that the organized process of education should be incorporated in cultural and civilizational context, and if one took into consideration the scientific research, claiming that as a result of new media expansion school pupils and students get to know the world mostly outside their schools, then cultivating teachers' awareness in the field of audiovisual culture consequences, especially within the system of elementary education, becomes the urgent need. Meanwhile, university courses, dealing with youngest pupils educational activities, very rarely offer lectures on anthropology, culture or media science, thus the knowledge which is absolutely necessary to run a reflective practice. Present article is by extension the comparison of research, which aimed at becoming acquainted with the amount of information on the subject of audiovisual culture and its implications, acquired by university students of elementary education courses. The method of diagnostic survey was applied in the research carried out in the year 2018, and the results demonstrate clearly the respondents' weak uptake of modern world regularities, which, by overpraising audiovisuality, brings changes in every area of our life.*

Keywords: *audiovisuality, elementary education, audiovisual culture, audiovisual literature, audiovisual perception.*

Introduction

Current cultural paradigm, founded on audiovisuality, creates new hierarchy, sets its own rules, brings dislocation on the stage of social communication, institutes new semiotic code, redefines the anthropological interpretation of a human being, at the same time generating different possibilities and different needs of a child at the elementary level of education. (Hopfinger, 2010; Sztompka, 2012). If one is to accept the assertion, that the organized process of education should be incorporated in cultural and civilizational context, and if one took into consideration the scientific research, claiming that as a result of new media expansion school pupils and students get

to know the world as a result of trained new cognition, described by scientists as audiovisual perception (Hopfinger, 1997), which at the same time and mostly takes place outside their schools (Melosik, 2002; Kłakówna, 2016), then cultivating future teachers' awareness in the field of audiovisual culture consequences becomes the urgent need. Meanwhile, university courses, dealing with youngest pupils educational activities, very rarely offer lectures on anthropology, culture or media studies, thus the knowledge which is absolutely necessary to run a reflective practice, all the more in the times of smooth postmodernism, when the dynamics of displacement in all fields of life is incomparably more intense than in the past.

Audiovisuality and its implications – theoretical outline

As Hopfinger writes: [...] “Audiovisuality constitute our anthropological endowment differently modified by word-of-mouth civilization, written or printed experience and even further verified by modern culture. It depended on the dominant forms of social communication in the context of civilizational changes. Insofar as the bygone ages were marked by longue duration, the changes of the 20th century were really quick, and latterly they come quicker and quicker one after another” (Hopfinger, 1997, 7). As a result, the contemporary society definitions, being described by researchers and built based on symptomatic and current social practices, fall under continued modification. Visual or even audiovisual culture shaped the society. This society was then divided by Sztompka (2016) into the following categories: the society of icons, of performance, of self-presentation, of design and voyeurism, by Boguni – Borowska (2016) the same community was described as the photo-society and by Castell (2010) as the web-society etc. For all those society groups *YouTubers* represent *genius loci*, where communicative memory, according to Assmann (2008), is more important than culture memory and “the dominant element is logorea of words-pictures” (Burszta, 2015, 29). Taking into consideration the accelerating technological development, which determines the changes in the character of culture, one can assume that the catalogue of attitudes of contemporary human beings remains still open.

One way or the other, present habits, customs and needs, regulating general activity, are different than even a few years ago and accompanied by the dominant forms of interpersonal communication they have triggered changes in the receptive attitudes also thanks to the broadening and modification of natural human potential. Hopfinger notices that: “Articulation of culture is the resultant of many factors, including biological and cultural patterns. Each new era is modelling anthropological endowment with the power of anthropological must. The shape together with the type of culture is favorable to certain structure of

reception preference; steering the coding only to some dimensions of reality; it formulates a kind of filter, through which it dictates its participants how to perceive the world and how to construct meanings. It brings permanent anthropological effects: it influences perception, which is obviously the feature of experience and knowledge” (Hopfinger, 1997, 7). Therefore, the effective audiovisual culture offered audiovisual perception (Hopfinger, 1997), incorporating multisensory experience into the cognitive act as well as using all the signs of social communication. It was shaped by the external conditions such as the digitalization of the world characterized by the ability to perceive instantaneously, lack of skill of longer concentration, simultaneous thinking in pictures, colors, sounds and numbers (Carr, 2010).

Thinking about students, especially schoolchildren, that kind of a situation may lead to multifarious effects, which on one hand manifest the ability of being fluent in operating the tools of new media, but on the other hand it creates pejorative consequence such as difficulties in mastering the art of linear reading, which is important for the development of reading competencies, and consequently for reflective and rational understanding of the world.

The acceleration of technological development is not indifferent for school functioning. For sure schools do not exist in a vacuum and thus cultural and civilizational context is essential for them to play the right role in students' lives as well as for appropriate functioning of schools themselves. It is quite clear that the situation is unknown to those involved in schooling, which may lead to the conclusion that: [...] “nowadays education is held outside schools and becomes the field of action and feature of new media, which by far take over the role of traditional educational institutions, creating standards and new cultural heroes who depict new lifestyles, aiming at pleasure, utilitarianism, success and individualistically perceived satisfaction and happiness, even if it was to be a temporary and fragmented experience” (Kasprzak, Kłakówna, Kołodziej, Regiewicz, & Waligóra, 2016, 470). A school, where organized education takes place, cannot be an isolated, sort of rogue planet in the cultural universe, on which an abstract educational activity and acquiring the sense of the world is being held (Burszta, 2002). What is more, “one cannot build up identity within the actuality of a remote land, being in the situation of comfortable seclusion from what is going on in the cultural universe – in every day life, in media, in traditions, in politics and so on” (Burszta, 2002, 34).

Meanwhile, the source literature, my personal experience as a school teacher and methodology advisor as well as the research record sheet show Steiner's antinomy of relations between education and culture, which is not yet defused, but even escalated. Schools seem not to notice both, the internal (Carr, 2010; Spitzer, 2013; Vetulani, 2014) and the external changes in the life of homo irretitus, which are caused by the audiovisual paradigm of culture

(Lindstrom, 2005; Burszta, 2006; Llosa, 2015; Mirzoeff, 2016; Delsol, 2017; Eco, 2017; Everett, 2018; Klus- Stańska 2018).

Therefore, the important demand is to give students of teachers' colleges an opportunity to explore anthropological issues, which, together with philosophy, pedagogy, psychology or media sciences, will let them detect changes taking place in reality and influencing human development, learning and teaching.

The present article accounts for the research and afterthought record sheet, which aimed at preliminary recognition of the status of knowledge of audiovisual culture and its consequences, presented by students of elementary education colleges.

Research procedure

My research on audiovisual literature addressed to children at a younger school age contributed to the research conducted in 2018, the purpose of which was to determine how the awareness of current audiovisual culture among students of pedagogical studies preparing to work with students of the first stage of education is developed.

The subject of the research was their information on the current paradigm of culture and its anthropological effects.

The main problem was the question about their understanding of cultural and civilizational context in the organized educational process.

The diagnostic survey method was used. On the other hand, a questionnaire was selected as a research tool, which is the subject of the chosen research technique. Pilch and Bauman write that: "the questionnaire is a technique of gathering information consisting in filling in the most often by the respondents themselves special questionnaires usually with a high degree of standardization in the presence or more often of an interviewer's absence" (Pilch & Bauman, 2010, 96).

The participants were chosen among the last year graduate and postgraduate students of regular and extramural studies, who are studying to prepare themselves for their work with younger pupils of the first years of elementary school as well as with children from kindergartens. The alumni of pedagogical studies together with active teachers from postgraduate courses, who were mastering their skills necessary to work with children were also among the respondents. The research was carried out in one of Polish universities on the group of 139 participants. The program for processing research results in this work was: *Statistica 13* 32-Bit PL.

In order to verify the assumed hypothesis, stating that present students do not always know the consequences of the current type of audiovisual culture, because they are not offered classes on anthropology within the frame of their

academic courses, a diagnostic survey comprised of the questionnaire with open and closed questions was applied to collect the comprehensive opinions of the respondents.

The collected and documented information were the subject of qualitative and quantitative analysis, what led to formulate conclusions, creating the prolegomena for the discussion about the solutions changing and broadening the humane dimension of future educational staff education.

One of the questions, built on the multiple choice questioning scheme, was about the main determinant of the course of contemporary culture development. Taking cognizance of the indication (table 1) it turns out that the vast majority of students is aware of the fact that the current cultural paradigm is being created by new media, but there are also presumptions for the conclusion that quite a big group of respondents, just a bit less than a half of them all, do not understand essential cultural definitions. Unfortunately, that kind of a situation may lead in the future to pointless pedagogical practices, causing not only the lack of children's motivation, but further conducting to unsatisfactory educating of children for their participation in the world and their understanding of the rules of civilizational and cultural functioning either.

Table 1 The current cultural paradigm profile according to students preparing themselves for their work at the elementary level of education

Contemporary cultural paradigm is oriented:	Students' answers:	
industrial development	30	21,58%
new media and its products	104	74, 82%
the art of the word	5	3,59 %

Source: Own research.

n=139

In the next question the respondents were asked to answer the key issue of relationship between the cultural and civilizational context and contemporary education at the elementary level. The answers brought data, which do not leave us with the sense of security about our pedagogical future, whereas the respondents were gathered from either present or forthcoming teachers of elementary school and kindergarten children. It seems that their answers should expressly define the relationship of education with what is happening in a child's environment. Meanwhile, almost half of the students / respondents did not express definitely positive answers (figure 1), and others, who marked the choice '*it matters*', in majority (45%) could not argue their choice or their explanations concerned the culture understood as children's musical and / or theatrical activity. One can assume that the cultural and civilizational context is

perceived by those students / respondents as the component of education, which should be taught of, rather than the environment in which the school is functioning.

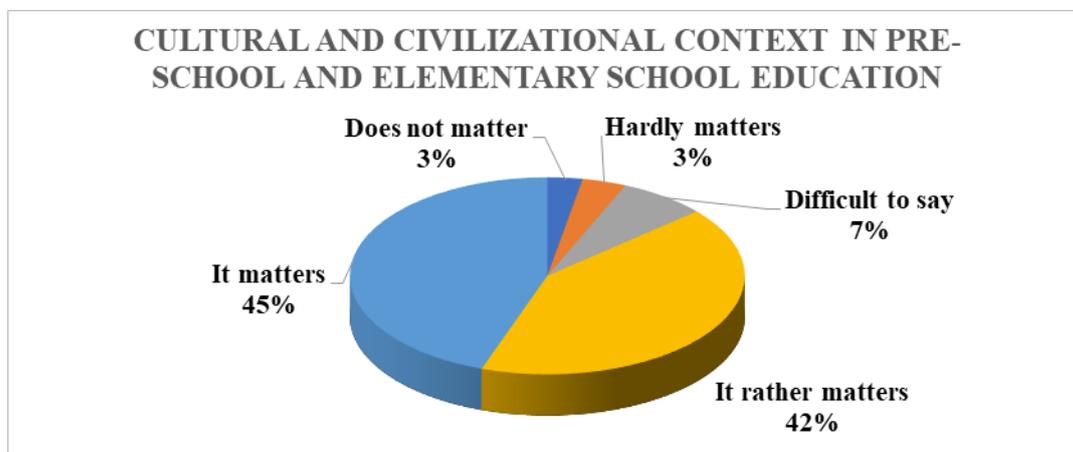


Figure 1 The pre- school and elementary school education college students' consciousness of culture and schooling correlation

There were rare claims in which one can observe an outline of the kind of thinking stating, according to what Burszta says, that: “education is after all a peculiar way of preparation for life in culture” (Burszta, 2002, 10), for the inquiry form contained the following sentences:

- „It matters because of the development of civilization, mixing of cultures and the change in the patterns of behavior”;
- „New media and their products have impact on every sphere of human life”;
- „Because culture influences on the content communicated to children”;

Although in the last sentence the phrase: *communicated to children* seems to be a bit problematic and not really accurate and it could be replaced by: *about which we talk with our children*, the articulated sense shows the right direction of thinking.

The students / respondents did not recorded the information connecting the change of cultural paradigm with the need to modify the methods and forms of education. They did not write about other younger pupils cognitive skills, they did not mention current social practices and experience, which determine children's interests so different than their peers had a few years ago. One can look in vain for notes on new skills (e.g. quick reading) or new receptive attitudes and at the same time on the need of preparing our children for reading hypertexts, literature, internet memes or audiovisual literature as it is according to Regiewicz (Regiewicz & Warzocha, 2018). No respondent wrote about the

urgent need for teachers to talk with their students about the shape of contemporary reality, leading to development of children's "conscious choice about the shape of their own identity" (Melosik, 2002, 32), which is now upset by globalization and economic dominance.

Another question was combined with the above mentioned issue. The conclusion helped to establish whether students of pre-school and elementary school pedagogy are able to detect the antinomy of contemporary education and culture (figure 2) expressed by numerous scientists. The answers showed clear dichotomy in the respondents thinking and at the same time they proved respondents incomplete knowledge about what is presently going on and little awareness of the role of schooling in the process of inheriting and preserving culture, but also its function concerning the furtherance of the development of cultural competencies as well as personal choices. Concurrently, one may have hope that thanks to relatively short pedagogical internship at schools, the students / respondents were not able to make the accurate diagnosis of the recounted issue. It also shows that the interviewees probably still place organized education separately from what is happening outside schools, at the same time proving the antinomy mentioned by Burszta.

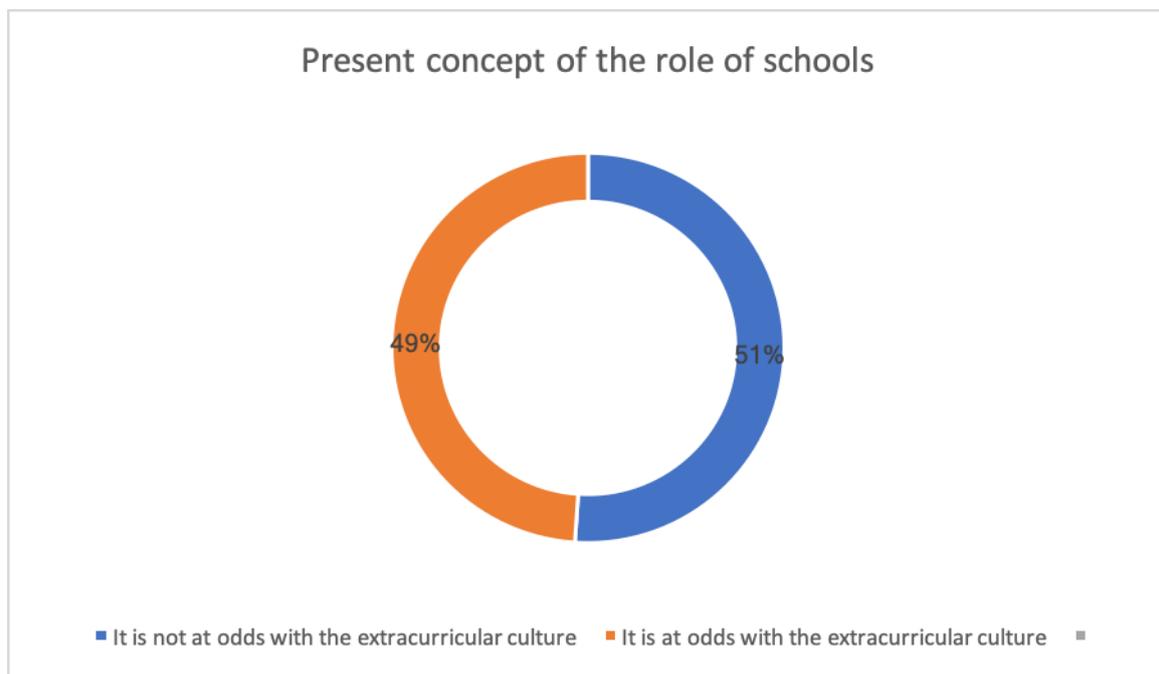


Figure 2 Opinions of the elementary schools teachers-to-be on the relationships of today's education with the extracurricular culture

However, 51% of opinions of those studying pre-school and elementary school pedagogy, within the frame of studies, talked about a dissonance between

education and culture, but only 45% of them were able to match correctly the definition of audiovisual culture with the right answer for the next question. One can therefore wonder if the supposed paradoxes are this big, that they are perceived by people who do not base their observation on scientific thoughts?

The attempt to mark the definition of the *audiovisual culture* brought the conclusion that the vast majority of respondents (80%) either did not ever heard of such a formula or could not describe it, or ticked the wrong answer (figure 3). It shows how badly the anthropological analysis within the frame of pedagogical studies is necessary. At the same time it comes down to the fact that those people who should be marked by high level of general and specialized knowledge have not done their homework yet. One may conclude that the factual knowledge of the teachers-to-be is not satisfactory, and therefore on the cusp of its course it distorts the scenes of teaching practice.

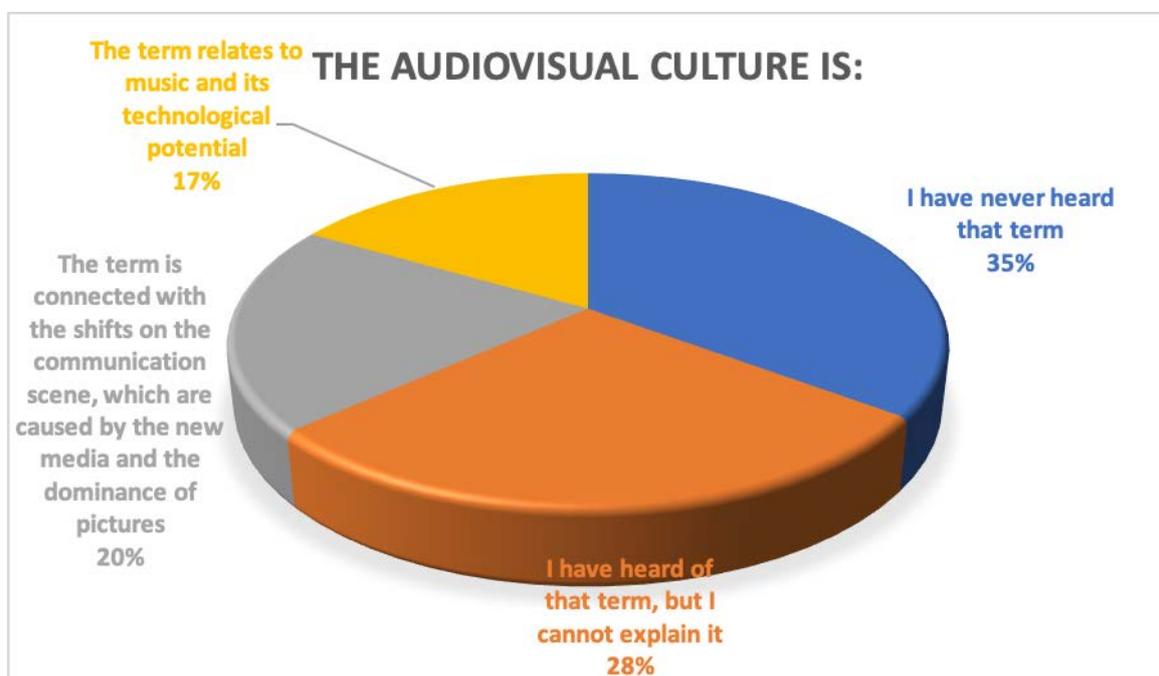


Figure 3 *Audiovisual culture in the opinion of students of education*

Conclusions

Correlating the data from the recounted research and afterthoughts one may conclude that the students preparing for their future work pre-school and elementary school pupils not altogether understand the essential issues, concerning the rules of contemporary world. As a result, it can go into the effect of wrong planning of their own pedagogical practice, inconsistent to the needs of a contemporary child. The consequences of such a situation seem to be too

obvious. The described problem does not allow them to detect the dangers or to see the wrong correlation between culture and education either. Consequently, not only may the wrong educational patterns be preserved, but also the organizers and later the little participants of education can incompetently read the semiotic code.

Summary

One of the components which lets to evaluate teacher's work as correct is their factual knowledge. As for the teachers at the elementary level it not only deals with their expertise in certain subjects and preservation of the autonomy of different issues, but it also refers to their constant broadening and updating the news about the world and about human beings. As Kłakówna wrote: "In any case, it is important to seek the awareness of the situation complexity, including the position of pupils and their teachers, especially at the so called „mass schools”, and to define those situations. It is crucial to be conscious of the philosophical ground for the chosen concept of a human being. Planned and chosen styles as well as the methods or strategy of acting and also the matter suggested as the subject of cognition depend on the way of thinking about human beings, about human condition and about the place of a man in the world" (Kłakówna, 2016, 65). In today's world, in which the dominant audiovisual forms of communication and the digital revolution so popularized the photographic, phonic and film reproduction of reality that it has led to its virtualization and to simulation, at the same time changing human cognitive potential. This seems to be the main issue as it has also weakened the sense of identity, the development of cultural and anthropological awareness of students preparing themselves to start their professional career as teachers. In that sense the role of schools sounds like antidote for the accusation of the activity based on the insensate to civilizational and cultural changes model of education, which awaits the urgent modification with reference to audiovisuality, audiovisual culture and its consequences.

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