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SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO ANALYSING THE EDUCATIONAL SPACE IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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ПЕДАГОГИКА, ПСИХОЛОГИЯ, СОЦИОЛОГИЯ

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*Julia Valerievna Taratoukhina**State University - Higher School of Economics*SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO ANALYSING THE EDUCATIONAL SPACE IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY[©]

Today's educational space is a combination of off-line and on-line structures and their interaction within both monocultural and multicultural frame. First, it is necessary to define the modern cyber-educational space and how it affects the structure of the educational systems and processes. Due to the development of information technologies, the interaction between the participants of any educational processes became much more efficient, the access to the international education resources became easier, and it is now possible to meet the demands for educational information products and services. Consequently, all these brought about new methods of pedagogical interaction and made the old ones more efficient. Distance education technologies provide for a more flexible educational process, make it more adaptive, interactive and easy to access. Undoubtedly, the distance education enables us to discuss the appearance of new educational forms and models in the modern educational space. This article studies the ways the educational models are represented in the modern world, their interaction with the socio-cultural spaces from which they originated, and the integration and transformation processes we can observe in the today's educational process.

It is evident that the educational system is capable of resisting the disintegration processes in our society only due to its being a source for the new ideas and meanings. The modern educational space (and not in human sciences alone) is a complex phenomenon (due to interaction of cultures and their interference with each other).

This enables us to argue that the educational space as part of the semiosphere is a system formed of languages of different types and statuses, and is constantly interacting with other systems, which predetermines its development within the convergent cultural semiosis. For instance, to model the semiotic processes occurring in the educational sphere as a dynamic system, we can apply Charles Peirce's idea [8] of the dynamic nature of sign; to describe the education models as static systems, we can apply Ferdinand de Saussure's theory [9]. The basic issue is how to locate the human in the sign dynamics of the education models.

The integration processes in the information society are very intensive. Any integration process must be viewed only as based on semiotic heterogeneity, both formal and contextual. The educational space becomes dynamic mainly due to the semiotic heterogeneity, which arouses new meanings and implications. When viewed from the semiotics approach, the constants of the educational space are certain fundamental principles of the pedagogic culture in the given socio-cultural space. The educational space exists within the communication and cultural space will always be framed by social, temporal, behavioral limitations, as well as by cognitive thought and speech models.

The educational space can be defined both as a static category and as a dynamic one reflecting the development and instability of the discourse, which is caused by the integration and the stochastic nature of the processes within the system.

The works of Irina Melik-Gaykazyan study the educational space in the framework of divergent development of educational models as complex self-organizing systems. Obviously, the disintegration processes are typical for many structures in the socio-cultural space, including the educational space. From this view, the development of the educational space can be described as divergent, non-linear and irreversible. In the post-industrial society the information space is becoming increasingly chaotic, which arouses the need for structuring and conceptualizing the communicative functions of the educational space. It is obvious that the information technologies are employed nowadays both in the traditional method of education and in the one now growing popular - distance education or e-learning. Here distance education is understood as educational services with a vast number of students, educational facilities and institutions of varying complexity and size.

The e-learning employs both synchronic and diachronic patterns of the training process. In certain cases the educational process is carried out only through the distance pattern where e-learning is used partly to increase the effectiveness of the traditional model.

Accordingly, there arises a question of axiological orientation. That is how to establish the axiological limits for influencing the person while the educational process. We shall note as well, as Irina Melik-Gaykazyan says, that modeling the non-linear development of the educational systems cannot be done without defining the methods and criteria of monitoring the communication space in the educational process.

N. Bordovskaya and A. Rean study the educational space from different respects: as a socio-cultural phenomenon, as an object of scientific research, and as part of the social practices. In any culture the educational space has specific structural and communication correlations, forming its contexts. Certain socio-cultural constants, predetermining the changes to the educational models, will be studied below. In this work it is appropriate to note the interconnection between the socio-cultural spaces and the educational patterns. There are numerous classifications and indicators for defining socio-cultural spaces, based on the fundamentals of the national consciousness. We rely on classifications of the following scholars to describe those interconnections:

1. R. Lewis [5] classifies cultures on the basis of *direction of their activities* as monoactive, polyactive and reactive.
2. Yury Lotman [4] suggests the ability *to incorporate new information* as a criterion and thus classifies cultures into insular - unwilling to integrate new information - and continental, on the contrary.
3. Edward Hall [10, p. 189]. *Mentality and behavioral patterns are linked to the perception of time in the culture* (monochronic vs. polychronic cultures and the related behavior).
4. Hofstede [11, p. 245] assesses cultures according to the individual's self-orientation (individualism - collectivism); according to the degree of verticality or hierarchical distance (power-oriented and authority-oriented); according to the uncertainty avoidance (weak vs strong); masculinity vs femininity in social values.

If we rely on Hofstede's criteria [11], the educational patterns in different cultures will be based and developed on these very criteria. S. Myasoedov [7] claims that from the point of the individualism vs collectivism criterion the aim of education in individualist cultures is to train an individual to learn and live relying on oneself. The aim of studies is preparation for self-dependent and valid life in the constantly changing world. Here an individual is taught to rely only on oneself. They are provided with patterns and methods which they can apply according to certain situations. Much attention is paid to off-track, creative solutions to the problems, and to the project work and the ability to work in team (as in individualist cultures this sometimes can make a problem). On the contrary, in collectivist cultures there is a prejudice that education is only for the young ones. Much attention is paid to the fundamental knowledge, which is often accompanied by learning by heart huge amounts of information. Sometimes the theory lack links to practice. Thus, we can say that the collectivist cultures experience the problem of applying the fundamental theoretical knowledge to practice. In this respect, we find it interesting to note the classification of N. Ladyzhennets [2], providing 4 paths of the development of the educational models: idealistic, materialistic, pragmatic and existential. These paths are nothing but the further development of the above-mentioned cultural and cognitive dimensions. The materialistic culture is predominated by the aim to gain scientific competence. The pragmatic culture is mainly oriented towards personal intellectual development. The idealistic pattern is aimed at perfection which is rarely achieved. The existential culture is oriented towards the person's individual development. These patterns are closely connected to the fundamental values of different cultures and to the territory they live in. A. Liferov suggests classifying divergent regional segments on the basis of the interaction of the educational systems. This is based not only on the region criterion, but on the influence of the national mentality features.

1. Regions generating the integration processes (Western Europe, the USA, Canada, the Asian Pacific nations). They are characterized by the strategy of higher requirements to the quality of training.

2. Regions ready to respond to the integration processes (Latin America nations readily joining the international programs with the European nations).

3. Regions reluctantly participating in the integration in education. (East Africa nations and several South-East Asian nations).

This paper was aimed at locating the educational space as a category in the framework of various semiotic parameters.

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