

УДК 811.162.1:37.016(481)

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EDUCATIONAL SITUATION OF TEACHING POLISH LANGUAGE IN NORWAY

Poles are the largest group of immigrants living in Norway. Deeper penetration into the structure of society of the Polish people will diagnose its current needs and anticipate their future requirements. This raises the need for a variety of interdisciplinary research on the problems of migration, as well as analyses of cultural studies, sociology, linguistics, cultural psychology. At the moment the most urgent is educational aspect. The high increase of births of Polish children can predict that in a few years Norway will face an even greater challenge than today. That is why it is significantly important to take care of the development of Polish schools abroad and strive for its popularization. This article shows the educational situation of teaching Polish language in Norway. Author presented history of teaching native languages in Norway, the way of organizing teaching Polish as a mother tongue and types of activities. Polonial education in the Kingdom was characterized from different perspectives: profile of pupils and teachers, teaching materials, demand.

Key words: Polonial schools, Norway, education, challenges, Polonial school, teachers.

ОСВІТНЯ СИТУАЦІЯ ВИКЛАДАННЯ ПОЛЬСЬКОЇ МОВИ В НОРВЕГІЇ

У статті описується ситуація польської мови у Норвегії. Представлено історію викладання рідних мов у Норвегії, спосіб існування польської мови як рідної та види занять. Суботні польські школи охарактеризовано з різних аспектів, а саме учнів, викладачів, матеріалів викладання, потреб. У статті представлено діяльність та специфіку найстаршої польської школи у Норвегії.

Ключові слова: Норвегія, освіту, проблеми, школи, вчителі.

ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНАЯ СИТУАЦИЯ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ ПОЛЬСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В НОРВЕГИИ

В статье описывается ситуацию польского языка в Норвегии. Представлена история преподавания родных языков в Норвегии, способ существования польского языка как родного и виды занятий. Субботные польские школы охарактеризованы с разных точек зрения, а именно учеников, преподавателей, материалов преподавания, потребностей. В статье представлено деятельность и специфику старейшей польской школы в Норвегии.

Ключевые слова: Норвегия, образование, проблемы, школы, учителя.

Introduction

Poles are the largest group of immigrants living in Norway. According to the latest research carried out by *Statistics Norway* they are the biggest group of emigrants on the Norwegian territory. At the beginning of 2016 their number stood at 95 700 people. Polish community in Norway – comparing to other nationalities – is relatively new group, created just few decades ago. For this reason making researches on this group is a challenge not only for sociologists, but also for linguists, ethnographers and developmental psychologists and intercultural. Deeper penetration into the structure of society of the Polish people in Norway will diagnose its current needs and anticipate their future requirements. This raises the need for a variety of interdisciplinary research on the problems of migration, as well as analyses of cultural studies, sociology, linguistics, cultural psychology. At the moment the most urgent is educational aspect. The high increase of births of Polish children can predict that in a few years Norway will face an even greater challenge than today. That is why it is significantly important to take care of the development of Polish schools abroad and strive for its popularization.

Roman Laskowski shows that an immigrant in a new country faces many challenges, i.e. accommodating to different living conditions as fast as possible. At the same time an immigrant has to keep in mind that he must keep his culture's identity.¹ The researcher underlines that children especially will face many challenges and that they should be provided the right development in two languages and two cultures. Their upbringing in the multicultural spirit lies both on Polish side and on the country that takes them.²

Copenhagen Declaration is a document that clearly shows the understanding of these needs. It states that:

*Accepting the immigration process as taking up the actions that respect societies' cultural diversion, we endorse initiating and organizing such actions by polish teachers. Thanks to them young Polish generations will be able to create in the nearest future society that will matter in their new countries that shall partake actively in the social life both in their ethnical groups and in the country that takes them.*³

In order to promote teaching Polish as native and second language in Nordic countries, Nordic Union of Polish Education was called up. The notion to create common educational organization was born in Sweden in 2009. Its' main goals are:

1. Initiating and endorsing various forms of cooperation between UE's organizations,
2. Taking activities to enhance Polish education standing and providing legal and organizational frameworks for their functioning in Scandinavian countries,

¹ R. Laskowski, *Język a tożsamość etniczna. Kształtowanie się poczucia narodowego młodej polskiej diaspory w warunkach wielokulturowości* (Eng. Language and ethnic identity. Formation of national consciousness of the young Polish diaspora in terms of multiculturalism) [in:] «LingVaria» VIII, 2(16), Kraków 2013, p. 78.

² Ibidem, p. 82.

³ The text comes from Copenhagen Declaration.

3. Developing the cooperation between organizations associated in UE with education authorities in Poland, especially in terms of consultancy of education projects connected to Polish education outside Polish borders,
4. Increasing the quality of educating students in the area of Polish language as native and foreign, education and Polish culture in Scandinavian countries by taking joint education initiatives,
5. Cooperation with foreign and international organizations and institutions in terms of propagating teaching native languages, teaching Polish as foreign language, Polish education and culture,
6. Initiating the works promoting teaching native languages, learning Polish language as foreign and Polish education and culture in Scandinavian countries,
7. Acting for increasing the awareness towards multilingualism among parents.⁴

The key areas in which Nordic Union of Polish Education operates are: migration processes and their educational consequences, integration models in foreign education systems, migration student and his native education aspirations, teacher of migration student and his/her qualifications, parents and other people from a student's environment, native education supporting system, Polish education organizations and their role in supporting the education.⁵

Nordic Union of Polish Education is mainly interested in integrating a student with cultural values of country of origin and a country to which he/she migrated, obeying the principle of culture and language dialogue, noticing student's candour and shaping his/hers identity connected to the country of origin and open to other cultures.⁶

In Scandinavian countries teaching Polish language and culture can be done in three ways: a) teaching Polish as native language in local education systems, b) teaching Polish language, history and geography at Polish social schools, c) teaching at School Consultancy Points by RP embassies.⁷ It is worth mentioning in few words, what were the beginnings of teaching foreign languages in Norway.

The history of teaching native languages in Norway

Teaching native languages in the Kingdom counts barely 40 years. It was started around 1970. Two years later in Oslo the first program was implemented at schools. It was adjusted to immigrant students' needs. Special classes for kids, who did not know Norwegian were created. The goal for these classes was effective teaching students so that in a brief period of time they could partake in classes with their Norwegian friends. Unfortunately, due to the shortage of proper teaching staff not each and every migrant child could have attended such classes.⁸

The situation changed in 1976, when European Parliament gave Norway additional funds for teaching native languages. At that time the number of immigrants in the Kingdom began to rise dramatically and providing the possibility of teaching native languages became a great challenge to Norway's authorities. At that time teaching minorities' languages was municipality's responsibility.⁹ During the following years that approach changed – nowadays each school can make decisions on its own, whether it wants to support or not. Many schools in the capital city decided to allocate all the additional funds for teaching immigrant-children Norwegian language.¹⁰

Students, who receive primary and secondary education in a language different than Norwegian have the right for *special teaching until they reach level of knowledge high enough to study according to regular education program in Norwegian language. If it is necessary, students have the right to study their native language and bilingual education.*¹¹ The main goal of such education is to help students use Norwegian language in a better way, and developing four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) in native language. Thanks to such actions multicultural sensitivity increases and it *develops student's identity and bilingualism in a comparative perspective.*¹²

Organizing teaching Polish language as native in Norway

Nordic Union of Polish Education states that:

*According to Norwegian law, each student of primary or secondary school, whose native language is not Norwegian, has the right to learn Norwegian as the second accordingly to student's needs, until he is proficient enough to participate in classes with peers.*¹³

According to *Education Act* immigrants' children have the right to learn native language at primary and secondary school, if their language skills in Norwegian are insufficient to study in that language. If they do not achieve a desirable fluency during their education at school, they also have the right to attend a bilingual professional training.¹⁴

The responsibility lies on municipality. Its' task is to assign an immigrant student a teacher who uses both Norwegian and Polish languages, who will allow him to learn a new language by using his native language.¹⁵

In Norway teaching native language in various municipalities is different, it depends on financial standing of schools. Main guidelines could be contained in 7 points: employed teachers do not need to have education in Polish language and teacher's license; teaching takes place at school, to which a student goes to; teaching takes place during lessons; amount of hours devoted to teaching native language is not specified; the number of students partaking in classes is not specified; it is possible to teach in an individual manner; subject *Native Language* is not included to certificate.¹⁶

Types of Polish lessons conducted in Norway

To give a proper perspective of Polish language lessons that are conducted in Norway all data were put in a table form as presented below¹⁷.

⁴ http://unianordycka.com/unianordycka/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/NUOP_Gotowy_Raport-2-10-12.pdf, p. 11.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 12.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 12.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 16.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 22.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 22.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 23.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 23.

¹² Ibidem, p. 23.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 34.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 47.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 48.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 49.

¹⁷ Source: Nordic Union of Polish Education, p. 51.

	Extra classes during primary education	Paid in Saturday social schools
Number of students	No data	Around 700
Tendency	Growing	Growing
Students' age	7 – 14	6-18 lat
School year	from 15th August until 24th June	The beginning of September – until 20th June
Number of hours per week	1-2	ok. 10 h per month
Days of week	From Monday to Friday, during classes or after classes	Classes carried out on Saturdays
Terms and conditions	Polish language should be used on every day basis, students are obliged to partake actively during classes	A student should speak Polish language
Teaching scheme	Teaching based on: <i>Læreplan i morsmål for språklige minoritetet</i> .	Programme based on MEN education programme for Polonial schools
Main goals of teaching	Keeping and maintaining language skills, learning about native language, strengthening national identity and developing bilingual identity	Keeping and maintaining language skills, developing the knowledge of native language, strengthening national identity
Municipalities' duties	Each school that takes a child has the duty to inform about the possibilities of learning Polish language, parents have the right to official information about teaching process, they inform school's headmaster and municipality about the desire to study native language	Teachers are employed by schools/ organisations that govern institutions
Teaching staff	Municipalities employ teachers, there are no staff trainings	Teachers with proper education work at schools

Evaluation of how Polish language is taught in Norway

The researches indicate that teachers in Norway employed as so called *morsmåls lærer* in a distinctive majority are not Polish language teachers and do not have proper qualifications to teach Polish language, that is why, quite often, it is very similar to teaching Norwegian language by using Polish language. Sometimes classes are being conducted instead of other lessons, which can lead to both students' and parents' frustration.

Polish schools in Norway:

Polish embassy in Oslo put an information on its' official web site about Polish schools in Norway. The schools in questions are as follows:

1. Polish Consultancy Point by Polish Embassy in Oslo.
2. Polish Saturday Schools in Oslo.
3. Polish school in Bergen.
4. Polish Catholic Saturday School in Stavanger.
5. Polish Saturday Social School in Fredrikstad.
6. School of Polish Culture in Trondheim.¹⁸

Polonial schools in Norway have relatively short history. The oldest one is Polish Saturday School in Oslo established in 1988. The main purpose of Polonial schools is promoting and cultivating Polish language and culture among children and youth.

Polish School in Bergen was established in 2009. It is a social institution, funded entirely by parents. The school implements the program of teaching Polish language, history, geography and civics. Classes are held every second Saturday. Pupils of this school are children and adolescents in the age of 3 – 18.¹⁹

Polish Catholic Saturday School in Stavanger was established in 2007. For the school the most important is: teaching Polish language, history, religion; cultivating Polish spiritual and cultural values; shaping positive attitudes of children and parents to the values and traditions of the Norwegian nation; building attitudes of understanding and respect for people of other nationalities, religion and culture, in line with the European spirit of tolerance and community. Classes are held every second Saturday.²⁰

Polish Saturday School in Fredrikstad was found in 2009. Creating the school was possible thanks to the kindness of Pastor Nguyen Van Tuan, and the church of St. Bridget. The school uses rooms located in the church. School for the main purpose of its activity sets: integration of a large part of the Polish community, teaching in Polish history and culture of home country, supporting and guiding the development of a child, forming and expanding child's openness to each other and other people, developing creativity and individual interests, developing motivation to act.²¹

Pupils are children aged 5 to 15 years. Founding and leading Saturday School is the Union of Poles in Fredrikstad.

School of Polish Culture in Trondheim was established in 2009. Classes are held every Friday until 17.00 in the halls of the church of St. Olaf. They offer Polish language classes, geography, history, and voluntary classes in religion.²²

Polish Saturday School in Oslo

The school exist since 1988. It is the oldest Polish school in Norway. Its originator, founder and headmaster was priest Joseph Adam Kozłowski, who had more than 50 years of experience in the activities of Polish emigrants in England, Canada, the United States and Africa. Currently the headmaster is Hanna Sand.

¹⁸ http://www.oslo.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/polacy_w_norwegii/polskie_szkoly_w_norwegii/

¹⁹ <http://www.polskaskole.no/>

²⁰ <http://szkolawstavanger.no/Stowarzyszenie.aspx>

²¹ <http://szkolapolska.com.pl/oszkole.html>

²² <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Szko%C5%82a-Kultury-Polskiej-w-Trondheim-Polsk-Kulturskole-i-Trondheim/330244733657668?id=330244733657668&sk=info>

The school was established in order to learn Polish language, religion and other subjects in mother tongue, spreading Polish culture and uphold the tradition. According to the statute, Polish Saturday School in Oslo is a community of which members are children, youth, teachers and friends of the school.²³ The school has a Catholic profile, but is open to all Polish children. It does not represent any specific politic direction. The curriculum includes the following subjects: Polish language, religion, geography, history and music.²⁴ The dominant position is the Polish language with the wider national culture. Students use materials specially prepared by qualified teachers or textbooks intended for Polonial students, books for children attending schools in Poland and specially written textbooks to the Polish language, which are intended to meet the needs of students of Polish Saturday School. The majority are students who were born in Poland, who accomplished part of education there, and who have both Polish parents. They came to Norway a few years ago. The second group of children attending Polish Saturday School in Oslo are children with Polish-Norwegian origin, born in Norway. During the classes, there is no distinction; all children learn together the same material. The main task of the teacher is therefore preparing materials for classes, which are clear and easy to understand, both by the one and by the other group of learners. In this aspect, the flexibility of the teacher is very important, because children who lived for many years in Poland will struggle with different types of problems than those born and raised in Norway.

It should be noted that a group of children in Polish community is very diversified. Some of them use Polish language correctly, they have a rich vocabulary, and they do not make a large number of grammatical errors. Other children were commonly making mistakes in declinations and conjugations, they had a lack of fluency, and they mixed styles and varieties of the Polish language. Children, regardless of place of birth and origin of their parents, also have problems with using official language. This is mainly because in Norway, to all persons in every age category, it is usual to use the name. In Norwegian language, it is not common to use forms of politeness like Polish *pan, pani* (mr., mrs.), or constructions such as *Czy mógłby pan...* Children routinely forget about using phrases: please, thank you, sorry. No official application forms in the Polish language is the result of transferring Norwegian behaviors. Norwegians appreciate directness in conversation, using simple language. Compared to the Polish language, Norwegian is much less *polite*. Let's compare the structure of the question asked to elder people in both languages:

1. Polish: *Czy mógłby pan pożyczyć mi długopis?*
2. Norwegian: *Kan du låne meg en penn?*

The construction of the question asked in the official style in the Polish language is much more difficult and may result in problems for children, especially for those who were born in Norway or have parents of Polish and Norwegian origin. The presence of the conditional, forms *pan/pani*, extend the duration of the questions in Polish, and Norwegian strives to full efficiency. In addition, children on every day basis meet the Norwegian version of the sentence. If the Polish version is used more often, it means probably that children hear an informal style.

There are much more linguistic problems occurring with children from Polish-Norwegian families. Because of the occasional contact with Polish language, they have more communication problems than their friends from school. Sometimes it happens that they speak Polish only when they are at Saturday School (which gives five hours every two weeks). Later contact with the language might be sporadic. The result can be poor vocabulary, communication problems, problems with the correct declination and conjugation, with the correct way of writing Polish words, reading Polish sounds (especially: *cz, ć, sz, ś, ż, ź, dź, dż, ł, l, w*).

It is worth remembering that children who live in Norway learn Polish language during the weekends. They have daily lessons at Norwegian schools, play sports, develop their interests, and meet with family and friends. They come to Saturday School on Saturdays, often tired after a long week of work. When their peers are resting, they are having five hours of Polish, history, religion and geography. It is therefore something extra – something that should be appreciated and cherished. Therefore it so important to motivate children to learn their mother language. This responsibility lies both on teachers and parents. There must be cooperation. Discipline is also a significant factor. Especially when it comes to younger children, who do not realize that Polish language might become useful one day, and that it is worth learning it.

Joanna Wójtowicz in the article: *Potrzeby nauczycieli polonijnych w zakresie doskonalenia zawodowego (Needs of Polonian teachers in the field of vocational training)* mentions expectations towards a teacher who works abroad. It is important that he is able to: recognize the need of students, understanding the psychological determinants of learning process and personal development; skillfully defined learning objectives and upbringing of students; design learning situations where students have the opportunity to learn independently, developing their own abilities and interests; promote mutual understanding in the team, influence on the attitudes of students; analyze conditions of his own teaching activities; initiate activities that affect the improvement of the quality of school work.²⁵

Wójtowicz presented the results of the survey conducted in 2006 in: Argentina, France, Kazakhstan, Germany, Norway and Lithuania, in which 228 people took part. The main concern was to discover which competence of Polonian teachers should be improved. Teachers of the Polish language in Norway indicated that they wish to develop their methodical competence (47%), subject's competence (29%) and psychological competence (24%). In terms of methodology, the biggest need is in: creating modification of programs (96%), using a variety of teaching methods (96%), individualization of the learning process (83%), selection of materials for the classes (78%), using technical tools of teaching (74%), assessing the achievements of pupils (70%), formulating objectives of the lesson (65%), diagnosing the needs of students (65%), preparation of teaching aids (57%).²⁶

In terms of subject knowledge Polonian teachers working in Norway would like to know more about: the national heritage and Polish culture (87%), current cultural events (65%), geography of Poland (61%), history of Poland (57%), news about Polish movies (57%), religion (26%). Only 17% of teachers would like to expand their knowledge about Polish literature, vocabulary, modern and contemporary literature, theory of translation, and 4% – in terms of spelling.²⁷

All teachers would like to improve competence in the field of developmental psychology, 78% – the impact of physical activity on learning process, and 70% would be interested in the subject of motivation in learning.

²³ H. Nicolaisen, Polska Szkoła Sobotnia im. Jana Pawła II w Oslo (Eng. Polish Saturday School in Oslo) [in:] Oświata polonijna na początku XXI w. Stan i perspektywy, (Eng. Polonial Education at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Status and prospects), red. K. Gąsowska and M. Mazińska-Szumaska, Kraków 2006. – p. 175.

²⁴ K. Leszczyńska, Rola pisma polonijnego w środowisku imigrantów na przykładzie «Kroniki» z Oslo (Eng. The role of the Polonial magazine in the environment for immigrants, example of «Kronika» from Oslo) [in:] E. Olszewski Polacy w Skandynawii (Eng. Poles in Norway), Lublin 1997, p. 288.

²⁵ Wójtowicz J., Potrzeby nauczycieli polonijnych w zakresie doskonalenia zawodowego (Eng. Needs of Polonian teachers in the field of vocational training) [in:] Oświata polonijna na początku XXI wieku. Stan i perspektywy (Eng. Polonial Education at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Status and prospects), red. K. Gąsowska and M. Mazińska-Szumaska, Kraków, 2006. – p. 203.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 209.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 210.

According to Joanna Wójtowicz, such a high rate of needs is a result of the fact that in Norway, only since 2004, methodology training are carried out and Polish teachers have not received so much support, as teachers in other countries, which have greater experience in organizing training improvement.²⁸

Every teacher who works in Polish schools, regardless of a subject, must be aware that he/she is a model for students. The way that he speaks, how he behaves, what he draws his attention to – all these aspects are setting examples for students. Certainly, pupils will imitate his language and way of speaking. According to Edward Olszewski: *Polish Saturday School in Oslo became a factor of integration of a large part of Polish people living in Norway, it serves well for spiritual culture and Polish interests in Norway.*²⁹

Conclusions

Based on the above analysis of teaching Polish language in Norway, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Despite the fact that Poles are the largest group of immigrants living in Norway, teaching Polish language is not very popular. However, we can assume that in the future the situation will be changed, because of increasing the birth of children from Polish parents.

2. Polish Emigration in Norway increases every year, which gives reason to believe that in a few years, Polish schools will have a greater number of students. This will lead to increased demand for Polish teachers.

3. Each year the number of children with Polish-Norwegian origin will be increasing, and therefore there will be a need for special training for teachers in the field of multiculturalism.

4. A better knowledge of the Norwegian language of teachers will allow them to work more effectively with students. They will be able to prevent in a better way the spread of negative transfer from Norwegian language into Polish.

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